The Qur'an and the Gospels

A Comparative Study

Dr. Muhammad M. Abu Laylah

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دراسة مقارنة

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AL-FALAH FOUNDATION
For Translation, Publication & Distribution

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Published by:
AL-FALAH FOUNDATION FOR TRANSLATION,
PUBLICATION & DISTRIBUTION

24 At-Tayaran st., Nasr City, Cairo, Egypt
Tel. & fax: (202) 2622838
Website: www.falahonline.com
E-mail: info@falahonline.com

رقم الإيداع: ٩٧/٤٢٧٣

I.S.B. N. : 977-5813-55-X

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Preface

Each person is born under circumstances which are not of his own choosing. The religion of his family or the ideology of the state is thrust upon him from the very beginning of his existence in this world. By the time he reaches his teens, he has usually been brain-washed into believing that the beliefs of his particular society are the correct beliefs that every one should have. However, when some people mature and are exposed to other belief systems, they begin to question the validity of their own beliefs.

God gave us all minds and intellects to enable us to make this crucial decision. It is the most important decision in the life of any human being; upon it depends his future. Consequently, each and every one of us must examine dispassionately the evidence presented and choose what appears to be right until further evidence arises.[1]

In this book Dr. Abu Laylah, a well-known scholar in the field of comparative religions, examines the authenticity of both the Qur'an and the Gospels through comprehensive analysis and investigation basing his arguments on rational as well as textual proofs, with the aim of reaching a fair and unbiased attitude towards both of them.

General Director
Sheikh Muhammad `Abdu

Introduction to the Third Edition

It is with pleasure that I present the third edition of my book about the Qur'an and the Gospels.

I have devoted myself to this subject for more than 25 years researching it thoroughly and monitoring all academic publications on the subject as they appear.

There are a few editorial errors in the previous two editions which I have been able to correct here.

I also included some important suggestions and comments made by Prof. Blankeship at Temple University who is an assistant Professor of comparative religion, and I register here my gratitude to him.

This book serves several different purposes. Firstly, it wishes to set out the Islamic tradition, the Islamic point of view based on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and Muslim scholarship, to help non-Muslim readers to gain a closer view of Islam and a fairer view of this great religion.

Secondly, it aims to demonstrate to non-Muslims that the Islamic view of the gospels is the true one.

Thirdly, it will help Muslims to understand the gospels.

It is my principle when studying other people's religion that we should provide facts which help others go through it without prejudice and without danger of misunderstanding. To write about other

religions, in my view, is like providing a map to give details of certain area. If the map is wrong the information is wrong and will prove to be of little use. In recent times, interfaith days have become important in the public curriculum.

Dialogue, conversation, argument are characteristic of human life. We cannot live without talking and we cannot talk without a subject. Talking together involves an exchange of ideas on the subject.

Dialogue means intellectual communication between people. It reflects their varied approaches, different positions in life, varied ideas and different beliefs. All prophets of God without exception entered into dialogue with their veterans, especially with their critics. Dialogue was a prominent element in the delivery of God's message to His peoples. In almost every Scripture we find a form of dialogue between two persons, or between a person and an abstract idea (such as wisdom), or a person talks to his own soul.

In the gospels, Jesus talked to his Disciples in many occasions. Some of his Disciples collected these dialogues and preserved them.

The Dialogue of the Savior is published in the Nag Hammadi library in English Leiden (1977) n 229 introduced by Helmut Kuester and Elaine Pagles and translated by Horold W. Altridge.

This fragmentary text consists of a collection of conversations between Jesus and the Disciples, comparable to Q or the Gospel of Thomas but also including comments and traditions from various sources. It is arranged to put over a certain world-view.

Including comments and traditions from various sources. It is arranged to put over a certain world-view.

We will proceed with our discussion. Jesus entered into dialogue with the Disciples, with rabbis, and even with Satan. In the Qur'an,

God talked to the angels in a form of dialogue, about the creation of Adam, and with Iblis when he refused to low down before Adam, as Muslims low towards the direction of the *Ka`bah*.

In the Qur'an there are many forms of dialogue: between some of the prophets and their nations, or between two ordinary people discussing proper behavior (as a means of teaching). In this way God showed us that we should be persuasive, convincing, open minded, ready to listen to others when teaching, Muslims took dialogue very seriously and soon developed what is now called interfaith dialogue or debate.

Prophet Muhammad himself set an example by debating with non-Muslims, Jews and Christians, and his example was followed by his Companions and Followers.

Dialogue was not merely a skill practiced by scholars, theologians and philosophers, and also by rulers and politicians, and even in modern times most of the dialogue which takes place in society is conducted by rulers, presidents and princes.

Talking to other people is an admission of their existence and importance, of the role they play in maintaining the order of the world. There is no superiority on inferiority in dialogue. In Islam we have many books regulating the form of dialogue, defining its moral and religious aspects.

Concerning Christianity, reading the gospels gives the impression that Jesus spent most of his time with his Disciplines, in a small circle. Later, after his departure, the Disciples began to preserve, in writing what they remembered of Jesus' sayings and the result was many collections of the words of Jesus. Some added comments and interpretations to the recorded sayings.

As mentioned in the book, the church gives official sanction to only four of the gospels at about the time that the church became the state religion of the Roman Empire the trinity was adopted as official doctrine and other dogma was rejected as heresy, and any book other than the four canonical gospels was rejected also. The church considered itself the guardian of the true Christian faith as she saw it.

The majority of churches of which the Church of Rome took a leading role rejected all other viewpoints as heresy, exploring the diversity of earlier development. Bishop Irenius and his followers, for example, insisted that there could be only one church, and outside of that church he saw no salvation.

Members of the one true church alone, are Orthodox, literally, straight-thinking Christians, and he claimed that this church must be 'Catholic', that is universal. Any one who challenged that was declared to be a heretic, and excommunicated.

When the orthodox gained military support sometime after the emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in the 4th century the penalty for heresy escalated. (*The Gnostic Gospels*, Elaine pagles p.21F.)

Reading the history of the church and the apostolic Fathers, it is clear that all other religions was regarded as 'pagan', and all people other than Christians were in danger of destruction, with no hope of salvation. It is almost impossible to find a fair description of other religions in Christian literature, even up to modern times to some extent.

In this book I have included pieces about the ancient Christian gospels but have deliberately avoided going into detailed discussion. It is striking that the gospel of Thomas is silent about the matter of

Jesus' death and resurrection, as Helmut Kuester says "the keystone of all proclamations."

But Thomas is alone in omitting mention of this. The source Q that was used by Matthew and Luke does not consider the death of Jesus to be part of the Christian message, and thus does not concern itself with reports of the resurrection and subsequent events. The Gospel of Thomas and the source Q in that way challenge the assumption that the early church was unanimous in regarding Jesus' death and resurrection the cornerstone of Christian faith. Both documents emphasize that the significance of Jesus lay in his words, and not in what people thought about him. This puts Jesus closer to the Muslim view.

Again, it is striking that the Gospel of Thomas is also totally silent on the titles given to Jesus by others, such as 'Lord', 'Christ', 'Son of Man', 'Messiah' and 'Son of God'.

The title 'Son of Man' given to Jesus in the canonical gospels and in the "Q" source is an indication of his manhood and absolute human nature but to the Christians it is an indication that Jesus is the one who will appear from heaven at the end of time, shown as lightning flashes and lights up the sky, so will the Son of Man be in his day. (Luke 17. 24)

The reader of this edition will find that important materials have been added and corrections made to the previous two editions. I hope you will find it useful.

CHAPTER ONE

Islam's Attitude Towards the Preceding Prophets

Islam is the irreducible religion of God, which was delivered by the prophets of the Most Holy since man was sent down to this earth. The Qur'an, the word of God, and the first and absolute source of Islam, directly acknowledges the prophets before Muhammad. It relates their missions and struggles in the societies to which they were sent and reports their stories with accuracy and reverence.

Concerning our belief, we are commanded by God to believe in all prophets, without discrimination. But it should be noted that the Qur'an does make distinctions between God's messengers, except on the basis of their suffering and forbearance. All prophets command our love and reverence. But those who underwent particular hardship and particular suffering command our special love and reverence. Jesus stands among that number with Muhammad.

Jesus, like Muhammad after him, called his people to bear witness to the prophets who preceded him. Furthermore, he declared the prophethood of his contemporary John the Baptist. Jesus' mission was declared by John, who bore witness to him as a prophet, but not as a Son of God.

Our belief in the prophets is accompanied by our belief in the Holy Scriptures, for as Muslims we hold that all of these Holy Books are the word of God, and originated from Him. The books named in the Qur'an are as follows: The Scroll revealed to Abraham, Az-Zabur revealed to David, the Torah revealed to Moses, the Gospel revealed to Jesus and the Qur'an revealed to Muhammad. I would like to note in passing that some of these books are lost, such as Abraham's Scroll, and that others were subject to corruption and distortion.

A Muslim's belief in Jesus must equal his belief in Muhammad himself. Whenever the name of Jesus is mentioned in the Qur'an a Muslim's eyes become full of tears and his heart full of affection. Indeed, this feeling runs so deep that we give to our children the names of Jesus and Mary.

But exactly who is Jesus in whom every Muslim must believe? Is he Jesus the Christ? The suffering Messiah? Is he the eternal Son of God? The third of the triad? The one who was crucified? Is he God incarnate? Is he the Redeemer?

I do say that Jesus of the Qur'an is also of reality and not just one of the previously mentioned designations. I will therefore have to repeat my question: Who is Jesus?

Jesus in the Qur'an

Judging by the number of verses and amount of details, the information given in the Qur'an about Jesus is extensive. I would venture to say that, as a Qur'anic figure he is portrayed with more comprehensiveness than any other. It should be made clear that the Qur'an is not a historical or biographical work in a literal sense. In other words the information given about Jesus, for example, was given through Revelation, to the unlettered Muhammad, who without being

an academic historian, corrected the position of Jesus as previously understood, whether by Jews or Christians.

In the Qur'an there are five things which are given special concern, especially in terms of creation. God speaks of His creation of the world in ordered sequence whereas the other four areas are of central importance to the subject of this book; they are: Adam and his children, John the Baptist and Jesus himself.

Because the making of Adam differs from that of the world, the process of his creation is recorded in great detail in the Qur'an, as in 15:29 and 38:72.[1] Moreover the making of Adam's children shows another, different, process of creation from clay, ﴿*Then We created of the sperm-drop a clot, then We created of the clot a tissue, then We created of the tissue bones, then We garmented the bones in flesh; thereafter We produced him as another creature. So blessed be God, the Fairest of creators!*﴾ (23: 12-14).

In this context we may refer to the making of Eve, who in Genesis (2:21-22) was formed of Adam's rib but in the Qur'an is created from a single soul of mankind:

> ﴿*O Mankind, fear your Lord who created you of a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women.*﴾
>
> (4: 1)

This brief survey of the creational process indicates clearly that the world was created out of nothing; Adam was created out of the world, Eve out of him and Adam's offspring out of coition between Adam and Eve. It must be quite clear that all of these were created by God and God alone. Moreover it is explicit that all things were created by God and not out of God. I mention this because the Christian belief

holds that, as in John, chapter 1, verse 1, "the world was created through Jesus out of the word of God." I mention this because it illustrates the power of God and the variety of creation.

In the Qur'an Jesus is called by name and is also designated the Messiah by attribute, son of Mary by human ascription, a servant of God by obedience, a prophet by the office of prophethood, a messenger by mission, a word of God by the way he was created and likewise a spirit from Him (God). Some Christians use these last two titles to support Jesus' divinity. For example John of Damascus (c. 675-749), says that: But since you (Muslims) say Christ is the word of God and spirit how can you revile us ...? If it (is outside God) the word then according to you, God is without a word and without mind. Therefore while you avoid giving God a partner, you divine Him.(2) The author of this quotation while purporting to represent the Muslim view seems closer to a description of the Christian concept, and fails to understand the basic Islamic tenet that the word cannot be divided from God as I explain it in my forthcoming book: *The Muslim View of Christianity.*

Very recently David W. Shenk has said in *A Muslim and Christian Dialogue*: "When a Christian looks at the Prophet Muhammad, he needs to evaluate Muhammad in the light of the total Biblical witness culminating in Jesus the Messiah. To the extent that the Prophet Muhammad accepts the total Biblical witness and the central significance of Jesus the Messiah, and not to the extent that the life and teachings of Muhammad give witness to the revelation of suffering redemptive love which we perceive in Jesus the Messiah, Christians should appreciate and affirm Prophet Muhammad." (3)

I find it necessary to comment on this statement, but very briefly. Rather, it seems to me that Shenk is saying if the Muslims are willing to say that Muhammad and the Qur'an accept the whole Bible and its

claims as scripture, then Christians can accept the witness of Muhammad to the correctness of Christianity and need not denounce him. This is still a propaganda play, but it doesn't mean that Shenk necessarily thinks Muhammad or the Qur'an accept the whole Bible as scripture. Shenk said: "Muhammad accepts the total Biblical witness", but this is completely erroneous. First this phrase shows Muhammad as one who can accept or reject in terms of his own humanity. As a matter of fact the Revelation given to Muhammad recognizes some Biblical statements and by its very nature refutes others. In our view as Muslims Jesus was not the culmination of prophethood, but Muhammad, as he himself declared, was. It is also our belief that our Prophet was foretold in the Torah, and we also believe in the two books just mentioned in which our Prophet was foretold. We believe in Moses and Jesus who bore witness to our Prophet. In other words we do not believe in anything that does not foretell Muhammad.

Jesus' titles in the Qur'an and the Gospels

The Qur'an gives Jesus several titles to which I have already referred; here I should like to shed some light on at least some of them.

First: The Word of God and a Spirit from Him

Jesus is called in the Qur'an "the word of God" (4:171), and according to another verse "a word from Him" (3:45). It should be noted that all the Revelations like the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an are called the word of God. Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni (d. 478 A.H.) informs us that some Christian apologists assert that Jesus is the word of God and the word according to Muslims is uncreated and this is exactly the same as the Christian faith in Jesus. Al-Juwayni says that Muslims indeed agree to call Jesus a word or the word, he supports his view by referring also to the Qur'an in several places, then

he goes on to say that the word means also God's decree, i.e., that God had created Jesus directly with his word *Kun Fayakun* "Be and it is". He draws the following from the Qur'an: ﴿*Indeed the likeness of Jesus in God's eyes is as Adam's likeness, He originated him from dust, then said He unto him, "Be" and he was.*﴾ (3:59).[4] Imam al-Haramayn suggests that the verse that calls Jesus *Kalimah*, a word from God, should be studied in connection with the other passages in the Qur'an which deny the doctrine of incarnation and condemn its adherents.[5]

Al-Bukhari stated that the distinction between Jesus and the word could be understood on fundamental linguistic grounds. Jesus is masculine in gender, but the "word" is feminine, as all Arab philologists agree. Thus Jesus was created by God through the agency of the word, but is not Himself the word. The English translation of the Qur'anic verse 4:171 states: ﴿*His word that He committed to Mary.*﴾[6] In Arabic, however, the word "that" is feminine in gender, standing for "word". Thus in linguistic terms, "word", being of feminine gender, cannot be the equivalent of Jesus. The word is entrusted to Mary by Gabriel (Qur'an 3:45). Al-Bukhari thus sees no difference between the creation of Adam and the creation of Jesus.

The phrase "The word of God" is used in the Qur'an in singular and plural forms *Kalimatu Allah* and *Kalimaatu Allah*, and it expresses different meanings, but its use as a title of Jesus can be explained in several ways, e.g., *Kalimah* means the prophecy or the glad tidings or the good news that God promised or foretold the prophets. One of our great Muslim scholars, ash-Sharif ar-Radi (d. 407 A. H. = 1016 A.C.) suggests that God calls Jesus *Kalimah*, meaning a word in a metaphorical way, i.e., that God guides people through Him as He guides them with His word, a view also held by the Mu`tazili Abu `Ali aj-Jubba`i.

Second: Servant

Like all prophets Jesus is called `*Abd*, a servant, to God:

﴿*Mary pointed to the child; but they said, how shall we speak to one who is still in the cradle, a little child? He said: I am God's servant; God has given me the Book and made me a prophet. Blessed He has made me, wherever I may be; and He has enjoined me to pray and to give the alms, so long as I live.*﴾

(19: 29-31)

The word `*Abd* here is used as a mark of honor and servility to the will and commandment of God:

The Qur'an says:

﴿*And behold Allah will say: O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?' He will say: Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing. Thou wouldst indeed have known it. Thou knowest what is in my heart , though I know not what is in Thine. For Thou knowest in full all that is hidden.*﴾

(5: 116)

Muhammad and all the prophets (peace be upon them all) were called `*Ibad* (servants) of God:

﴿*And they say: The Most Gracious has taken a son." Glory to Him! They are (but) servants raised to honor.*﴾

(21: 26)

The pious people were honored by God who named them His `*Ibad*:

﴿*And the servants of Allah, Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say: Peace.*﴾

(25: 63)

It indicates the human nature of the prophets including Jesus; the same title is also given to him in the New Testament.

The Christians' interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies can serve as an example here. The prophet Isaiah says (53:11):

> "My servant, many shall he claim for his own, [he shall] win their acquittal, on his shoulders bearing their guilt."(7)

I would like to note in passing that this prophecy refers to a man and not to a God or Son of God, more clearly the prophet Isaiah never dreamt of speaking of a God or Son of God in his foretelling. It seems interesting to bring to your notice that the Jews rejected the Christian interpretations of the Old Testament prophecies altogether, but it is beyond the scope of this book to deal with the interpretation of the prophecies of the Old Testament.

The biographical details we have of Jesus show that he acted exactly as a servant to a master, he commenced his mission at a certain time, i.e., when he was about 30 years old, and this indicates that he followed a commandment and did not begin preaching according to his own will. Otherwise why did he wait until that time? Why did he not begin according to his own will? Why did he not begin earlier or later than that time? And why did he commence his Divine activities with the baptism; why did the Divine and sinless need the remission of sin through baptism? Christians find it difficult to answer this question. I do think that Jesus went to John not only to be baptized by him, but also to show himself to John and seek his witness and this was in itself a sign of the Baptist's death. The swift death of John lends support to my point of view: The gospels show that these two personages, i.e., Jesus and John, never came in contact before they met in the River Jordan. This is also supported by the

confusion surrounding the relationship between the two figures. When Jesus was praying to God seeking His help. He acted precisely as servant to his Lord, when he expressed his inferior power to that of God. When he was asked by a lady to accommodate her two sons in his kingdom, one on his right hand and the other on his left, Jesus said:

> "You don't know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink? They said to him, 'We are able.' He said to them, 'You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and to my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'"
>
> (Matthew 20:20-23)

When he requested God to deliver him from the cup of death, he acted exactly in the same manner as a creature controlled by his God.

One of our great Muslim scholars in the 11th century looked at Jesus' prayer and anguish before the crucifixion and on the cross as reported in Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:36, and Luke 22:41-44. Ibn Hazm remarks: Is this the character of a deity or god? Does god pray to be kept away from death? Does god sweat because of the hardship he suffers when he is certain that death is all too imminent? Or when he must face his fatal end? Does god abandon god? Is this not absurd?[(8)]

Third: Prophet and Messenger

The Qur'an depicts Jesus as prophet and messenger of God. As an example, God says:

> ﴿*And when Jesus son of Mary said: Children of Israel, I am indeed the messenger of God to you, confirming the Torah that is before me, and giving good tidings of a Messenger who shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.*﴾
>
> (61: 6)

Also, Jesus' humanity is clearly stressed in the following Qur'anic statement:

> ﴿*The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a messenger, messengers before him passed away, his mother was a just woman, they both ate food (i.e., they were human), behold, how we make clear the signs to them, then behold how they are perverted! Say: Do you worship, apart from God, that which cannot hurt or profit you? God is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.*﴾
>
> (5: 75-76)

On the Christian side we have a good number or references to Jesus as prophet, e.g., according to Matthew 10:40, Jesus addressed his disciples saying

> "He who gives you welcome gives me welcome, and he who gives me welcome gives welcome to Him that sent me. He who gives a prophet the welcome due to a prophet shall receive the reward given to prophets."

In John 12:47 Jesus says:

> "If anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him: for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world."

This clearly puts Jesus in a context of a prophet and not a god, since he came to save as all prophets do, but not to pronounce judgment over the people. In the Qur'an God says to Muhammad:

> ﴿*Whether We show thee a part of that We promise them, or We call thee to Us, it is time only to deliver the message, and Ours is the reckoning.*﴾
>
> (13: 40)

Also, God says to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

> ﴿*Then remind them! Thou are only a reminder, thou are not charged to oversee them.*﴾
>
> (88: 21-22)

In John 12:45-46 moreover we read:

> "And he who sees me sees him who sent me. I have come as light into the world, that whoever believe in me may not remain in darkness."

This passage speaks of Jesus as a prophet sent by God to guide his people. It deserves special attention to note that Jesus called himself here "a light into the world." And God says about Muhammad, ﴿*O Prophet, we have sent thee as a witness, and light*﴾ (33:44). Also God describes the Qur'an itself as "guidance and light" and says about Torah, ﴿*Surely we sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light*﴾ (5: 44), and also God says the same about the *Injil*: ﴿*We gave to him the Gospel wherein is guidance and light.*﴾ (5:46)

With reference to the above information, Jesus cannot be exempted from the prophetic tradition, or distinguished from the other prophets.

As God says:

> ﴿*Jesus the son of Mary was no more than a messenger, many were the messengers that passed away before him.*﴾
>
> (5:75)

Luke makes the following statement:

> "While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?' And they

> stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?' And he said to them, 'What things?' And they said to him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in people.'"
>
> (Luke 24: 15-19)

Those who believe in him declared that he was accounted a prophet by God.

Before we conclude this chapter it should not be overlooked to point out that Jesus is also designated in the Qur'an as "Son of Mary" as already referred to above. This is perhaps the Qur'anic formal of the Biblical "Son of Man".

CHAPTER TWO

Islam - Concept, Dimension and Attitude Towards Prophets and Prophecies

The concept of Islam and its message

Islam declares itself to be one irreducible religion of God which has been delivered by the prophets of the Most Holy, ever since man was first sent down to this earth. In the Qur'an (42:13) God states,

> ﴿*The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah - that which We have sent by inspiration to thee - and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: Namely, that ye should remain steadfast in religion, and make no divisions therein.*﴾

In the Qur'an Islam is described as the religion of God (3: 19 & 83). Also, it is described as the religion of truth. Ibn `Abbas asked the Prophet which of the religions God loves most. The Prophet answered *al-Hanifiyyah as-Samhah*, the religion of purity and peace (i.e., Islam).(1) Anyone who submits to God through His religion as described above is the best of all people (Qur'an 4:125).

In the Qur'an, God distinguishes Islam as preached by all prophets and concluded by Prophet Muhammad from all other religions,

commanding Muhammad to say: ﴿*To you your religion and to me my religion.*﴾ (Qur'an 109:6)

The Arabic word *Din* "religion" is linguistically used to denote any kind of religions, creeds or faiths, whether false or true, whether revealed from God or created by man, in whole or in part.(2) True religion, according to Islam, is that which God revealed to the prophets which He chose from among His people to guide them along the right path. The Qur'an states that God did not deprive any nation of a prophet and a message. No people were exempt from this gift of God, ﴿*Thou art truly a warner, and to every people a guide.*﴾ (Qur'an 13: 7 & 4:165)

God sent His messengers, each speaking the tongue that would be understood by the people, and Revelation is present in the Hebrew Torah, and Psalter and the Aramaic Gospel as well as in the Arabic Qur'an (Qur'an 14:4). God also clearly states that He never punishes His people without sending a prophet to warn them and teach them first. To Prophet Muhammad, God states in the Qur'an that He has sent many prophets; some were named, some were not named:

> ﴿*We did aforetime sent Apostles before thee: of them are some whose story We have related to thee, and some whose story we have not related to thee.*﴾
>
> (Qur'an 40: 78)

However, the original language of all existing gospels is Creek, although the language of Jesus must have been Aramaic, unless an argument could be made that he knew Greek as a second language, which seems most unlikely. Matthew cannot have an Aramaic original because it uses 600 verses from Mark, according to the generally accepted priority of Mark. The only authentic Aramaic in the gospels then would be the handful of transliterated Aramaic phrases.

This is why we regard religion as the most important thing in the world, because it represents God's communication with men. God makes no distinction between nations, since He has sent prophets to all areas of the world, but He does make a distinction between the degree of obedience that they display to His Divine word, and the respect that they show to His prophets who deliver His message (see Qur'an 49:13).

The Qur'an directly acknowledges the prophets before Muhammad. It relates their mission and struggles against the societies to which they were sent. The Qur'an reports their stories accurately and reverently, acknowledging their function as prophets. Concerning the Muslim faith, we are commanded by God to believe in all prophets, without discrimination. God says:

> ﴿*The Apostle believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in God, His angels, His books, and His Apostles. 'We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His Apostles.' And they say: We hear, and we obey: (we seek) Thy forgiveness, our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys.*﴾
>
> (Qur'an 2: 285, also 2: 136, 42: 13)

Ibn Kathir says that whosoever rejects one prophet rejects all prophets.[3] The Muslim is therefore required to affirm his faith in all prophets of God and to show devotion to all of them. Hatred shown towards any prophet would cut him off from Islam. The Prophet Muhammad expresses his closeness to Jesus. Abu Hurayrah reported the Prophet as having said,

> *"I am most akin to the son of Mary of all mankind, and all the prophets have different mothers but one religion, and no prophet came between me and him."*[4]

The Prophet affirms the unity of the religions of heavenly origin.

Our belief in the prophets is accompanied by our belief in the Holy Scriptures, for, as Muslims, we hold that all these Holy books are the word of God - and originated from Him. The books named in the Qur'an are as follows: the Scroll given to Abraham, Az-Zabur which are the Psalms given to David, the Torah given to Moses, the Gospel given to Jesus and the Qur'an given to Muhammad.(5) I would like to note in passing that some of these books are lost - such as Abraham's Scroll, and that others have been subject to corruption and distortion.

The word Islam is used in the Qur'an by all prophets, for example, Abraham, Moses and Jesus and the Magicians at Pharaoh's court, the Queen of Sheba, the disciples of Jesus, also declared themselves Muslims.(6)

Islam is opposed to disbelief in God, and is in conflict with any form of atheism, but with regard to Judaism and Christianity, Islam believes that they all three came from the same source, the light shone from the same opening in the clouds. Islam has many points of agreement with the other two religions. Of course, there are differences, but despite the historical conflicts they have many things in common. The three religions lived together in harmony throughout the Muslim World. Everywhere in these areas you find synagogues and churches, perhaps side by side with mosques. Christians and Jews had their own schools and courts of judgment.

Islam means literally "complete submission to God", simply because He is our Creator. We do not create ourselves, so we cannot claim authority for our own selves. This is the simple meaning of Islam. The concept of Islam is Islam itself; you can feel it from just

reading or hearing the name. It is religion from God, not from Muhammad or any other human. God is the source of Islam, and God is its aim and end. The Prophet Muhammad was the vehicle for its transmission, he was a man chosen by God. His thoughts were not for himself, nor for his Companions, nor for the congregation, but for God. This is to say that Muhammad was a holy man and God's Messenger.

Islam also means complete acceptance of God and obedience to Him, not to worship any human, or impose divinity on any idea or system, or even upon the Prophet who delivered the message of God. Islam also means to sanctify the word of God, to protect it from tampering or corruption. Islam is a universal religion which addresses all humanity because all should submit their will totally to God. No one has separate will, or can be independent of the will of God. No one knows as God knows.

When we give ourselves to God and rise above our own natural arrogance and our egos then God gives us liberty and consciousness, working as free men but under His control. He will do things for us that are far beyond our capabilities. Everything is given to us by Him and we have nothing to give in return but thanks and submission. Someone might say Islam calls us to be slaves, and submissive, it takes away our freedom, our free will as rational humans, and requires us to leave everything to God. This would be called Fatalism. This notion might be true if it referred to submission to a fellow human, but submission to God is a different matter entirely. God, of course, created us free, and wants us free, and wants us to be free, but in a godly sense. The wheel is free to move, but not free to leave the axle. If God required us to be captives, He would not require us to work to be good and would not have sent prophets to teach us what is good and what is bad.

All are equal before God's Law. Each one of us has been created only by Him. No one else can claim to have created us, only the Almighty. Every individual bears the stamp of God.

It is also useful to mention that the word Islam has a wider sense of:

- Obedience

- Reliance

- Worship

- Participation

- Peace

- Greetings, soundness or good health.

All these real and symbolic meanings of Islam show us what Islam stands for. More precisely, Islam is the religion of Muslims, past, present and future. It contains creeds, law and worship. It is, in brief, a whole system of life which embraces every aspect of our human activities. In Islam we do not say "give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (Matthew 22:21) because everything is God's, including Caesar himself.

Islam's credo is to believe in God, Angels, the Holy Books, Revelation, Messengers of God, the Day of Judgment, and in one's destiny, be it bad or good.

Islam stands on five pillars: the *Shahadah* or the *Kalimah* meaning the declaration that "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger".

Then we advance further forward and perform the five daily Prayers.

The third pillar is the *Zakah* (Alms-giving). We give either in goods or in money, two and a half percent of what we have every

year, to be given to the poor and needy. This refers to all our possessions, including cattle and everything we own.

The fourth pillar is Fasting in Ramadan, a whole month of Fasting from dawn to sunset. All people of different ages and countries share this period of Fasting during daylight hours.

The fifth pillar of Islam and the last is the Pilgrimage to Mecca, once in one's lifetime, when one is physically and financially able to make the journey and secure to do so.

In Prayer and in Pilgrimage, God is the center of all one's devotions. The name of Prophet Muhammad is always mentioned in connection with God, but only as a Messenger may be mentioned in connection with his Lord and Master. In the Qur'an (6:162-163) Muhammad was commanded by God to say:

> ﴾*My Prayers and devotion, my life and my death, are for God, the Lord of all beings. No partner is with Him.*﴿

The belief in earlier prophets and Revelations constitutes an important article of Islamic Faith. It is not a diplomatic strategy or courtesy to other religions. For example, anyone who does not believe in Jesus, Moses, Solomon or David is an unbeliever, a non-Muslim. Anyone who fails to venerate Mary and do her honor is not to be counted among Muslims. Even when the adherents of the three religions are at war, the Muslims never fail to revere Jesus or the Old Testament prophets. The Qur'an does not contain a single offensive word against any of these prophets. On the contrary, it refrains from all ambiguous references, e.g., to Solomon in the Bible. Muslims believe that they have their name, i.e., Muslims not from Prophet Muhammad, but from their great father Abraham, and therefore from God. In the Qur'an 22:78 God says:

﴾*Struggle for God as is His due, for He has chosen you, and has laid on you no impediment in your religion, the creed of your father Abraham. He named you Muslims.*﴿

It is extremely important to note that in Islam morality is synonymous with religion. We cannot draw a line between the things that belong to morality and the things that belong to religion.(7)

On the other hand, it is not proper to perform Islamic religious duties with no regard to their moral context, for the empty performance of ritual brings no profit. A Muslim cannot follow the system of ethics and morality, and neglect his Islamic religious duties as prescribed by God.

Any Muslim who separates morality from religion or regards virtues as having a provenance other than God would not be a true Muslim.

Central to the Muslim belief is the universality of Islam. From the very beginning, Islam addresses itself to all humanity, and thus urges the Muslim to preach and spread its message among all people. Though in the Qur'an, God says ﴾*There is no compulsion in religion.*﴿ (2:256), He commanded His Prophet Muhammad to invite people to the way of God with wisdom and good admonition, and if needed, he could dispute with them in the best of manners.(8)

In his inaugural address to the International Islamic Conference at the Royal Albert Hall, London, Saturday 3 April 1976, Prince Muhammad al-Faysal said: "Islam knows no geographic boundaries or barriers of color, race or language. Islam is neither of the East nor of the West - it is the Message of God, the Lord of the universe, Lord of the East and Lord of the West, a message sent to the whole of mankind through all the prophets of God and finally through Prophet

Muhammad who was sent as a mercy towards the universe. Islam addresses itself to man as such - whatever be his background, his country, his color, his race or his language, and invites him to become conscious of his real position in the world - which is neither that of an abject slave nor that of an absolute master - he is the representative, the vicegerent, the deputy of God on earth, he is a custodian and a trustee of whatever lies within the bowels of the earth or over it. Everything is for him and he is in the service of Truth, for God."(9)

The Prince goes on to ask: "What is the real challenge of the modern age?" And then he answered: "Without going into details, I would like to suggest that man is faced with a bewildering situation today: on the one hand he has achieved tremendous material progress - he has harnessed the forces of nature to his service and created a technological and industrial society unparalleled in its magnitude, grandeur and technical efficiency, but on the other hand, he has failed to control his own baser passions and build human relations on the foundations of love, sacrifice, trust, piety and service. The institution of family is disintegrating.

Social relations are at a low ebb. Economic exploitation is rampant. Political aggrandizement is the order of the day. International rivalries are on the increase. Cultural tensions are splitting human society apart. Social injustice is tearing the soul of man. Man is proud that he has made a new world; man is ashamed, for this new world has failed to make his soul happy. After reaching the heights of technological progress, he finds his very existence is threatened by the forces of his own creation. He has learned to control his environment but not himself. He has lost direction and his sense of proportion. If this is the challenge of the modern age then the answer to it lies in rediscovering the principles of balance and proportion, in

rediscovering man's mission in life, in rediscovering the principles of control in human affairs; in short in rediscovering his relation with God. There is nothing wrong with material progress as such but once material progress becomes dissociated with moral progress and spiritual discipline until it loses its relationship with reality and is exposed to the danger of becoming an instrument of destruction. Man left alone swings to extremes - crass materialism or ascetic spiritualism. Divine guidance leads to the path of balance, the straight path, symbolized in the prayer that God has taught man to pray. "Our Lord, give us the best in this world and the best in the Hereafter."

Islam is Divine guidance, God, in His infinite mercy, has not left man alone. He has endowed him with the guidance of the right path. This guidance was revealed through all the prophets of God, from Adam, through Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus to Muhammad (Peace be upon them all). The message of Muhammad is not a new message; it is the message of all prophets of God, a message that man has again and again forgotten or changed and distorted. This message was presented by Muhammad (peace be upon him) in its original purity and in its Divine perfection. This is Islam.

Islam stands for one loyalty only - man's loyalty to his God - loyalty to truth and virtue. It establishes the principle that all human beings are equal and it is unjust to discriminate between them on the basis of color, race or territory - there is only one valid and universal principle of nobility - all those who are true to God, who fulfill their commitment to truth, who prove trustworthy, who are pious and virtuous and heedful of God are noble and those who fail on this criterion are those who fall down.

﴾*Mankind, We have created you male and female and set you up as nations and tribes so that you may know one another. The*

noblest among you in the sight of God are the most pious and heedful of you. ﴾

(Qur'an 49: 13)

And the mission towards which Islam invites man is to harness all material and human resources for the promotion of virtue, justice and peace. Material progress, yes - but not for the sake of material progress but for the creation of a noble, serene and just society and to seek man's salvation in this world and in the Hereafter."[10]

The Qur'an moreover, declared that Jewish and Christian scriptures had suffered corruption and distortion. Yet the Qur'an acknowledges the Divine origin of the two scriptures, calling the Jews and Christians after their Divine Book "The People of the Book" and (29:46, 3:20) "The People of the *Injil* (Gospel)." (5:47)

In the *hadith*, the two parties are called together *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* "The Godly and prophetically protected minorities". Under Islam the protected minorities enjoyed equality and freedom. Before Islamic (*Shari`ah*) Law, all people are equal. Specifically the laws concerning crimes and business dealings make no differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. In a Muslim country, the life of non-Muslims is well protected. The Prophet says,

> *"A Muslim who kills anyone who is living under Muslim protection can never smell the sweet odor of Paradise. Though its sweet odor can spread to a great distance, that distance would take forty years to walk."*[11]

Unfortunately, we cannot go any further with this wide issue. The brief information sketched above clearly shows the Islamic tolerance towards Jews and Christians.

Having presented the concept of Islam, its dimension and its attitude towards Jews and Christians, at this point I feel it is urgently required to talk about the latter's attitude towards Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Muhammad in the Torah and the Gospel

Since the advent of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the three religious communities - Muslims, Christians and Jews - have been in constant debate and dispute about Muhammad being foretold in the Bible. The People of the Book strongly, if not bitterly deny the occurrence of any prophecy concerning Muhammad as a Messenger of God. Muslims on the other hand insist that their Prophet was foretold, even by name, in the Revelations prior to the Qur'an, specifically the Torah and the Gospel. This is a major constituent of Muslim belief. Central to this is the fact that the Muslim belief in the early prophets and scriptures is qualified by their belief that Prophet Muhammad was foretold by the preceding prophets. Thus we cannot present Islam rightly without considering the Muslim claim that Prophet Muhammad was foretold by name and description in the earlier sacred books.

The Muslim claim stated above will be discussed and evaluated in the light of the Qur'an and Muhammad's biography. On the other hand, the Christian denial of the prophecies concerning Prophet Muhammad will be sifted and examined in the context of the Biblical foretelling, its implications and bearing.

The Christians in the Western world in general may be surprised to learn that their Bible contains references to the Prophet of Islam. They will be even more surprised to learn that Muslims take some prophecies which Christians believe apply to Jesus and apply them to Prophet Muhammad. To the Christians this is a new concept.

The life of Muhammad before and during his mission as a Prophet well testifies to the truthfulness of his Apostleship. Muhammad was always aware of the Divine link between himself and the pre-Islamic prophets. He defined his position in the line of prophets by stating that he was (the last brick on the edifice, the missing brick, so that the edifice was now complete).[12] He clearly indicates the continuation and completion of God's message. He says: "*I was sent to complete the code of the noblest morality.*"[13]

Muhammad was also fully aware that his rule as a prophet came as a fulfillment of the Biblical foretelling, a fact which was well endorsed by some eminent Jewish and Christian scholars of his time. Muhammad fulfills every prophetic characteristic perfectly, and is thus the world's great Prophet and the last Prophet to come to Planet Earth. The prophetic office culminated in and was sealed after him.

Before Muhammad was appointed as Prophet, even in his early years, everyone who saw him noticed the signs of prophethood - in his face, in his tongue and in his behavior. The Christian monk Bahira noticed this, and affirmed with his own words to the Prophet's uncle Abu Talib, after he saw the seal of prophethood between his shoulders, in the very same place described in his Book: "Take your nephew back to his country and guard him carefully against the Jews, for by God if they see him and know about him what I know, they will do him evil; a great future lies before this nephew of yours, so take him home quickly."[14]

Later on, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) received a Revelation: Waraqah ibn Nawfal, an Arab Christian, old in years and well versed in the Bible told him that he was the Prophet of his time, and that what he heard from him was exactly like what was revealed to Moses and Jesus.[15] The Jews of Medina were busily awaiting the

coming of the expected prophet.[16] From among the Jews of Medina, two famous Jewish rabbis, `Abdullah ibn Salam and Mukhayriq and later two other Jewish rabbis. The Yemenite Jew known as Ka`b al-Ahbar, died in Syria between [(32-36 A.H.) (652-656 A.C.)], was probably converted to Islam in about (638 A.C.) and moved to Medina during the Caliphate of `Umar ibn al-Khattab.

Ka`b al-Ahbar said that the true "Torah" contains at least ten explicit verses from the Qur'an. According to Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Ka`b al-Ahbar found in the Torah a long form of praises and descriptions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his people (referred to in Qur'an 48:29), then Ibn al-Qayyim relates, "And [Ka`b] the 'Habr' said: Well, when Moses wondered at all the good which God had bestowed on Muhammad and his people and said: 'I wish I were one of his Companions?' Then God revealed to him three verses of the Qur'an (all of them from Surat al-A`raf):

> ﴿*Said He (God): Moses, I have chosen thee above all men for My message and My utterance; take what I have given thee, and be of the thankful. And We wrote for him on the Tablets of everything an admonition, and a distinguishing of everything ...*﴾
>
> (7: 144-145)

> ﴿*...of the people of Moses there is a nation who guide by the truth, and by it act with justice.*﴾
>
> (7: 159)

I was told the story of `Abdullah ibn Salam, a learned rabbi, by one of his family. He said: When I heard about the Apostle I knew by his description, name, and the time at which he appeared that he was the one we were waiting for, and I rejoiced greatly thereat, though I kept silent about it until the Apostle came to Medina. When he stayed in Quba' among the Banu `Amr ibn `Awf, a man came with the news

while I was working at the top of a palm-tree and my aunt Khalidah Bint al-Harith was sitting below. She said: "When I heard that Moses Ibn `Imran had come you could not have made more fuss!" "Indeed, aunt," I said, "he is the brother of Moses and follows his religion, being sent with the same mission." She asked, "Is he really the Prophet who we have been told will be sent at this very time?" And she accepted my assurance that he was. Straightway I went to the Apostle and became a Muslim, and when I returned to my house I ordered my family to do the same.

I concealed the matter from the Jews, and then went to the Apostle and said: "The Jews are a nation of liars and I wish you would take me into one of your houses and hide me from them. Then ask them about me so that they may tell you the position I hold among them before they know that I have become a Muslim. For if they know it beforehand they will utter slanderous lies against me." The Jews came and the Apostle asked them about my standing among them. They said: "He is our chief, and the son of our chief, our rabbi, and our learned man." When they said this I emerged and said: "O Jews, fear God and accept what He has sent you. For by God you know that he is the Apostle of God. You will find him described in your Torah and even named. I testify that he is the Apostle of God, I believe in him, I hold him to be true, and I acknowledge him." They accused me of lying and reviled me. Then I reminded the Apostle that I had said that they would do this, for they were a treacherous, lying and evil people. I publicly proclaimed my conversion and my household and my aunt Khalidah followed suit.(17)

Ibn Ishaq says: Mukhayriq was a learned rabbi owning much property in date palms. He recognized the Apostle by his description and his own learning, and he felt a predilection for his religion until on

the day of Uhud which fell on the Sabbath, he reminded the Jews that they were bound to help Muhammad. They objected that it was the Sabbath. "May you have no Sabbath," he answered, and took his weapons and joined the Apostle in Uhud. His parting testimony to his people was: "If I am killed today my property is to go to Muhammad to use as God shows him." He was killed in the battle that followed. I am told that the Apostle used to say, "Mukhayriq is the best of the Jews." The Apostle took over his property and all the alms he distributed in Medina came from it."(18)

San Pedro referred to a certain Jew of Medina who converted many to Islam by saying that Muhammad was the Prophet foretold by Jewish law, in which his name was prefigured.(19)

Ka`b al-Ahbar and Wahb ibn Munabbih accepted Muhammad and followed him. Even the people who heard of him from far away accepted him as a genuine Prophet exactly like Moses and Jesus.(20)

The Qur'an does not only declare that Muhammad was foretold in the Jewish and the Christian scriptures, it also emphatically insists that the Jews and Christians do

﴾*Recognize him (Muhammad) as they recognize their sons. But verily, a party of them knowingly conceal the truth.*﴿

(Qur'an 2: 146)

The Qur'an also asks:

﴾*Is it not a sign to them that the learned men of the Children of Israel knew it (as true)?*﴿

(Qur'an 26: 197)

It is very interesting to note that the Qur'an ascribed to Jews alone among the prophets the message to the people that a prophet would come after him whose name would be Ahmad (Qur'an 61:6). This is

another name of our Prophet Muhammad, as shall be mentioned later in this chapter.

Moreover, Prophet Muhammad and those who believe in him are foretold in the Torah and the Gospel, recognizable by the Prayer mark on their foreheads:

> ﴾*This is the sign of their prostration in Prayer. That is their likeness in the Torah, and their likeness in the Gospel is like a seed that puts forth its shoot, and strengthens it, and it grows stout and rises straight upon its stalk, pleasing the sowers, that through them He may enrage the unbelievers.*﴿
>
> (Qur'an 48: 29)

The chapter and verse of the Bible in which this prophecy occurs are not mentioned in the Qur'an. It is for us to find out these prophecies.

The prophecy, its function and purpose

It is easy for anyone who reads the Bible in Jewish or Christian hands to find many prophecies and foretellings, whether concerning natural happenings such as earthquakes, or concerning kings and principalities. Prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel and also Jesus foretold that great events would happen, like those connected with King Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, the land of Edom, Egypt, Nineveh and Babylon.

In this context it should be pointed out however that, there are no clear references to Alexander in the canonical Jewish and Christian Bibles. Such references, which are historical rather than prophetic, as are found, are conferred to the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha. Some have speculated that references exist to Alexander in Ezekiel and the minor prophets, but that is far from established. References in the

Book of Daniel appear to refer to the Greek or Macedonian empire but not to him personally.

Can any Christian or Jew imagine, or agree with the learned rabbis or Christians, that their Books would contain no prophecy about Muhammad and the Islamic conquests which changed the face of the world and the course of history? Nothing about the Islamic Civilization which gave birth to Western Civilization? No prophecy concerning the Muslim scholars and saints? This is what the Syriac patriarch Timothy assumed, saying that if he had found one prophecy concerning Muhammad he would have been a Muslim.(21) This is despite the fact that many people even greater than Timothy have accepted Muhammad as the fulfillment of the prophecies that they have in the Bible, as I shall mention later.

As a counter argument, some people may point out that there are a lot of prophecies in the Old and New Testaments, but referring to false prophets. Such people try to prove that Muhammad was a false prophet. But if we examine the prophecies referring to the appearance of prophets we see that Jesus, for example, warned against false prophets. He specifically foretold that many false prophets would come after him, and indeed this was so, as we can gather from Corinthians 11:13-15 where Paul gave an account of distinguishing false from genuine prophets. Also 1 John 4:1-2:

> "Beloved friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God..."

It is clear that the prophets against whom Jesus warned come into the world after him. In Matthew 24:23 we read:

> "Then if anyone says to you 'Lo, here is Christ,' or 'There he is,' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray the elect - if possible, even the elect."

Jesus did not say that future prophets should be immediately disbelieved, but their message should be tested. Matthew helps us here when he tells us that Jesus said:

> "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles?"
>
> (Matthew 7: 15-16)

Before Jesus, Moses warned his people against false prophets and messiahs who would come after him:

> "A prophet or dreamer may arise, of thy own race, and foretell some signal event which afterwards comes about; even so he must not persuade thee to follow the worship of alien gods, untried till now."
>
> (Deut. 13: 1)

I may note here in passing that if the Christians apply the injunction of Jesus to Muhammad, as I said once to a Christian critic, why not that of Moses to Jesus? Moreover, Moses also provides us with a yardstick against which we can measure the claim of any prophet. Here I quote Deuteronomy 18:20:

> "But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods must be put to death."

Bearing all this in mind, can anyone with sound judgment and responsibility say that Muhammad is a false prophet? Can anyone say that when this is his fruit, one thousand million Muslims of many races living all over the world in all climates - Arab Muslims are now the smallest number. In fact non-Arab Muslims outnumber Arab Muslims by five to one.

Muhammad's fruit is the preaching of the One God, the Almighty God, and calling the people to believe in Him, acknowledge Him and to worship Him alone, delivering the people from sin and darkness to virtue and light, from destruction to life eternal, praising the prophets of God and defending their position, spreading peace and mercy for all mankind, human unity and equality, the brotherhood of nations, morality, virtue and civilization. Prophet Muhammad never raised himself above the human level - he was only a Prophet and Messenger of God, not divine himself.

Muhammad was known even among his enemies as most truthful, and God Himself says about him:

> ﴾*No! I swear by that you see and by that you do not see, it is the speech of a noble Messenger. It is not the speech of a poet (little do you believe) nor the speech of a soothsayer (little do you remember). A sending down from the Lord of all Being. Had he invented against Us any sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand, then We would surely have cut his life-vein and not one of you could have defended him. Surely it is a reminder to the godfearing, but We know that some of you will cry lies. Surely it is a sorrow to the unbelievers; yet indeed it is the truth of certainty.*﴿
>
> (Qur'an 69: 38-51)

Prophet Muhammad himself denounced lying; his most hated things were lies and liars. Safwan ibn Salim who took Anas ibn Malik as his source reported that Prophet Muhammad was asked "Can the believer be a miser?" "Yes," he answered. "Can the believer be a coward?" "Yes," the Prophet said. Lastly he was asked "Can the believer be a liar?" The answer was "No."(22) He was close to expelling liars from being Muslims, as can be seen from the above *hadith*. Prophet Muhammad's genuineness and truthfulness were established beyond doubt, Jesus asked his followers to test the mission and the purpose of a prophet before rejecting him? As far as I understand, the prophecy may not be clear enough, or it may be clear to some and ambiguous to others.

I am fully aware that some of the prophecies which I have mentioned and which do not precisely refer to Muhammad or identify him were taken by some evangelists and churchmen and explained as referring to Jesus, such as Deuteronomy 18:18; "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee ..." as shall be seen later. But if we know that even Jesus' Apostles themselves misconstrued some of his prophecies and failed to understand his purposes, then others may have wrongly criticized the Muslim interpretation.

When John the Baptist was asked whether he was the prophet or Elijah (John 1:19) he said, "I am not Elijah." "Are you the prophet? "I am not." They said, "Who are you then?" Here it is clear that the Pharisees were ignorant of Isaiah's prophecies and even John the Baptist failed to make himself clear.

In Matthew 11:11-15 Jesus said:

> "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist, yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is

> greater than he ... and if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear".

You will have noticed that the learned Jews and the disciples of Jesus were not certain of the nature of John the Baptist. And John himself admits that he did not recognize Jesus until God sent down the sign of the dove at the time of baptism. So there was a period of thirty years before John recognized Jesus by God's sign. The miraculous birth was not enough.

Yet, from his prison, John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" Moreover, if we read the prophecy in Isaiah we cannot understand it as a reference either to John or to Jesus. It is a general one. If it pointed precisely to Jesus, the Jews, Pharisees and disciples would not have had to ask him or doubt him. We should bear in mind that the calling in the wilderness is a general character of the prophets of God: it is not a specific reference to John. The Christians take Isaiah's prophecy (7:14) in which he predicted that a woman would conceive and deliver a child to refer to Jesus (he does not mention a virgin). (The Jews still do not believe that Mary remained virgin at the Conception). Another misinterpretation of prophecies of the Old Testament is Matthew 27:3-10 concerning Judas Iscariot and the thirty pieces of silver, which they identify with Jeremiah the prophet. Reading the prophecy, we gather that the wording and interpretation of Jeremiah are Matthew's own, not Jesus' because the passage in Matthew actually refers to Zechariah 11:12-13 rather than any part of Jeremiah.

I call upon the reader to open the Book of Zechariah to 11:4-14 and to read it in line with Matthew and then judge for himself whether the reference is to Judas Iscariot or the rabbis or the betrayal of Jesus.

Is it only the similarity in the two passages between the potter's field and the thirty pieces of silver which make it apply to Jesus?

This passage is one of the great scandals of the Bible. Jer. 12:4 contains no relevant reference. Jer. 18:2-6 refers to a potter, but no field or pieces of silver. Jer, 32:7-15 refers to the purchase of a field for 17 shekels of silver, but contains no potter. Usually Zechariah 11:12-13 is seen as a closer reference because it mentions 30 shekels of silver given as wages, but the reference is not clear either. The attribution to Jeremiah is a plain mistake in Matthew's text. The attribution of the above reference (Zechariah 11:4-14) to Jeremiah is credited by most scholars to Matthew's source and possibly to florilegium of texts, but it seems unlikely that a florilegium would have circulated with this attribution, some scholars consider Matthew's passage as an allusion to the purchase to a field in Jeremiah 32:6-15 and to Jeremiah's visit to the potter 18:2-3, from which allusions the entire text is attributed to Jeremiah; but this justification is entirely unlikely.

It should be pointed out that the text as in Matthew 27:3-10 is not quoted exactly from either the Masoretic text (of the Hebrew Bible) or the LXX (Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT).(23)

It is nevertheless clear that Zechariah is talking about himself, using the past tense. He speaks of tending the sheep and taking wages, which he called generous wages, in contrast to that taken by Judas. God commanded him to give it to the potter, not to buy the field. The donation was paid by a prophet to a good man, not paid by rabbis to a betrayer, Judas.

Why do we need prophecy, and when did prophecy start? We ask, is it necessary for a prophet to be foretold by a prophet before him?

The answer is emphatically no; the adherents of all religions are in agreement on this answer. For instance, there is no prophecy of the coming of Abraham, nor of Noah, nor of several of the Biblical and non-Biblical prophets. In other words, there are many other criteria to test the authenticity of a prophet. For example, it is valid to claim that the truth of a prophet is measured by his character, his miracles, his career, his achievements, and so on.

It is therefore not necessary for us as Muslims to supply proof of Muhammad's prophethood, simply from past prophecies and foretellings. But the question arises, why do Muslims insist that Muhammad was in fact foretold in Jewish and Christian scriptures? It is because God himself tells us in the Qur'an that Muhammad was foretold in them as referred to above.

It is true beyond any shadow of doubt that Prophet Muhammad fulfills all the requirements of a great prophet: his personal life, a radiant inspiration to all people, his achievements in building up nationhood, his performance of miracles of healing, the feeding of multitudes, and finally his own ascension to heaven and descending from it in the Night of *al-Isra' Wa al-Mi`raj*. In addition to this are his true prophecies concerning the wide and rapid spread of Islam, and major events in world history. A true prophecy can come only from God, and is the highest proof of the Divine origin of the message of which it is a part.

The question of when prophecy started, concerning the next coming prophet I would briefly say that prophecy was necessary only when required by circumstances. It began with the great prophet Abraham. God foretold to him that He would give him sons, son after son, and raise prophets from his seed. The prophecies given by and to Abraham are clear and decisive. God knows best about the conflict

and dispute which would occur between the cousins, the Muslims and the Jews, who are respectively the descendants of the two wives of Abraham, Hagar and Sarah.

Even Paul, who is said to preach the Gospel of unity between nations, emphasizes the difference between the two wives (Galatians 4:21-31). God, in His greater knowledge of His people, gave prophecies of Jesus before Muhammad because He knew that the Jews might take their books and their prophets as testimony against him in order to defeat his mission, and the prophecies of Prophet Muhammad were given by God so that Jews and Christians might not unite in denying him using their creeds, books, antiquities and traditions as means of rejecting him. Otherwise the deeds and moral character, miracles and success of the Prophet are enough to prove his mission. In the case of Jesus and Muhammad specifically, prophecy has a unique function, and each of these two prophets was supported by many prophetic passages in the Old Testament.

Muslims believe that Jesus foretold Muhammad even by name (Ahmad). Why by name, why was the name prophesied as Ahmad, the less common form of Muhammad, we should ask? Prophecy should not be so precise. The answer is that the prophecy contained the name because of the mentality and character of the people when Prophet Muhammad came - the Jewish and Christian communities were large and powerful and fanatical. It was necessary that a prophecy should be very clear and give an actual name.

It is essential to point out moreover that Christians believe that Jesus had an extraordinarily super power of predicting future events and happenings. In *The Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*[24] we read the following words: "If the Hebrew prophets received at times illumination which revealed to them glimpses of coming events, Jesus

was at all times able to reveal hidden things of the future with as much certainty as He could speak of the things clearly seen in the present."

The editors of the same Dictionary go on to make comparisons between Jesus and those Hebrew prophets who were able to foretell particular events to individuals, then they say: "Here also Jesus surpasses them with a certainty and clearness far beyond theirs. He was able to announce particular coming events to his disciples. Following the Gospel narrative, we find that the treachery of Judas was open to him for long (Jn.6:70 f.). The fall of Peter and his final martyrdom and the prolonged life of John, were all equally clear (Luke. 22: 31, Jn. 21: 18-22)"[(25)]

Having stated this one could ask, if Jesus was extraordinarily able to give clear and certain prophecies, what wonder then if he foretells the coming of Muhammad by name?

It is amazingly strange that Duncan B. Macdonald asserts that the Muslims have applied the name Ahmad (as in Qur'an 61:6) to Muhammad only because of the references in John to the Paraclete which agrees in meaning with Ahmad, "The praised one"[(26)] This is a serious charge, not only against Muslims, but also against the Qur'an. The question concerning the veracity of the Qur'an shall be dealt with in some detail in chapter three of this book, but it should be absolutely clear that there is no evidence whatsoever, neither to support the assertion that the Qur'anic phrase, *Ismuhu Ahmad*, whose name shall be Ahmad, was interpolated, nor to give credence to the assumption that Ahmad was not Muhammad's name. On the contrary there is a considerable amount of early and sound tradition to prove that Muhammad was also named Ahmad from the very beginning.

In this context it is interesting to note that the Gospel according to St. Barnabas one of Jesus' Apostles (Acts 11:24; 15:12; 28:9),

explicitly recorded Jesus' prophecy concerning Prophet Muhammad. According to this Gospel, Jesus clearly announced the coming of "Muhammad the Messenger of God", *Rasul of Allah*. The Gospel of Barnabas also agrees with the Qur'an concerning the nature of Jesus and his message.(27) Unfortunately the church banned that Gospel on the basis of their own reasoning.

Despite the fact that this Gospel agrees with Islam in many fundamental aspects, it does not however satisfy the meticulous criteria for authenticating a text according to the Muslim traditionalists, it stands on a single authority and its *Isnad*, uninterrupted chain of authorities, is entirely lacking.

Muhammad was the last of the prophets. This is stressed again and again in the Qur'an and in the *Sunnah*, Muslim tradition, because it is of such importance. It is worth emphasizing that none before Prophet Muhammad claimed that he was the seal, the last of the line of prophets, *Khatam an-Nabiyyin*.

Old Testament prophecies about Muhammad

As has already been mentioned in this chapter, the Muslims believe in the Torah and the Gospel, and hold that they are the word of God and originated from Him. They also believe that the two texts were subject to corruption and distortion. One might then ask why the Muslims use such distorted texts as evidence. This is an old and often repeated question. The answer to this is given by Ibn Hazm in his book *Al-Fayṣal*: "The Muslims acknowledge the Torah and the Gospel, they do not in anyway deny them. Moreover, we consider anyone who denies them to be an unbeliever, and we believe also that the disbelievers among the Children of Israel have changed the Torah and the Psalter. They added to them and took things away from them.

And God the Almighty protected some parts of them against corruption to serve as evidence against them according to His will: ﴿*He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned.*﴾ (Qur'an 21:23) And in the very same way the disbelievers among the Christians changed the Gospel, adding to it and taking away from it, and likewise God protected some parts of it to serve as evidence against them according to His will."[28]

Now to deal with the Old and New Testament prophecies concerning Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah be upon him).

Firstly, in Deuteronomy the fifth and the last book of the Torah we read the following passage:

> "The Lord came from Sinai and rose from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran."
>
> (Deut. 33: 2)

Seir stands for the hills in Jerusalem where Jesus preached, whilst Paran signifies the heights of Mecca where the chosen Prophet Muhammad proclaimed his mission. The heavenly light signifies inspiration, Revelation and Divine prompting. Its interpretation needed three stages: inauguration, continuation and completion. We may therefore interpret this passage of the Torah about the dawn of law-giving as follows: "The Lord came" signifies the arrival, the inauguration. "He rose from Seir"- is the continuation, the rising of the sun, the appearance of Jesus in Jerusalem. The Revelation on Paran represents the completion, with the mission of Muhammad.

The former Jewish rabbi as-Samaw'al al-Maghribi (d.576 A. H.; 1180 A. C.) who converted to Islam, looked at the same passage and then stated that the Jews know that Seir is the mountain range Sharat (Genesis 36:8, 20, 21; Deut. 2:5), on which lived the children of Esau

who followed Jesus. The same author goes on to say that there is clear evidence from the Torah that Mount Paran is the mountain of Mecca; in fact the Torah states that, when Ishmael parted from his father, Abraham settled in the wilderness of Paran (Genesis 21:21).[29]

As-Samaw'al, moreover, says: "Mount Paran is the abode of the people of Ishmael. If the Torah alluded in this verse to prophecy coming from Mount Paran, it follows that it is the prophecy unto the people of Ishmael, because it is they who are the dwellers of Paran. All will then see that the allusion to prophecy from the progeny of Ishmael points to Muhammad, for it was he who was sent forth from Mecca, formerly the abode of Ishmael. This indicates that the mountains of Paran are those of Mecca, and that the Torah, in this passage, alluded to the mission of Muhammad and announced it; but the Jews, in ignorance and error, fail to connect these two verses. They admit the premises but, in their excessive ignorance, not the conclusion. The Torah bears witness to their poor understanding and counsel, namely, in the passage."[30]

This is a clear-cut prophecy pointing to Prophet Muhammad and the Islamic faith, which has risen from Mecca and spread all over the world.

Moreover, in Deuteronomy 32:21 and also in Isaiah 65:1 we find another foretelling concerning the final seal of the prophets. The prophecy, in Deuteronomy, reads as follows:

> "They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding."

The nation referred to in the above passage is the Arab nation, who were obscure and unnoticed at that time. It is important to note

that the above Biblical passage should be read against the following verses of the Holy Qur'an:

> ﴿*It is He Who has raised up from among the common people a Messenger from among them, to recite His signs to them, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom, though before that they were in manifest error.*﴾
>
> (Qur'an 62: 2)

> ﴿*That is their likeness in the Torah, and their likeness in the Gospel: is like a seed that puts forth its shoot, and strengthens it, and it grows stout and rises straight upon its stalk, pleasing the sowers, that through them He may enrage the unbelievers.*﴾
>
> (Qur'an 48: 29)

Again in Deuteronomy 18:18, we read:

> "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

"Among their brethren" is important - this means from brothers of the Jews, but not from the Jews themselves. The Jews apply this prophecy to Joshua the son of Nun. The Christians take it as a reference to Jesus. However, firstly, this prophecy cannot be applied to Joshua, since in Deut. 34: 10 it is stated:

> "And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."

Joshua was with Moses, and it is not accepted that the reference is to someone present at the time. Moreover, Joshua was from among the Israelites, so how can he be from among the others?

The Christian explanation of the above prophecy is even more improbable than that of the Jews; first, Jesus was himself a Jew, like Moses and Joshua, and thus he must be excluded from the prophecy for the same reason. Again, the prophecy talks about a prophet from among the brothers of the Jews; Jesus was one of them, not of their brothers. The more we dissect this prophecy, the more we are certain that it is in no way a reference to Jesus.

One would ask, in which way can Jesus be said to be like Moses? Is it because his mother was a Jew (as we know he has no father), or is it because he is called a prophet by the evangelists, who also gave him many other titles?

One can also ask, was Jesus the only Jewish prophet to come after Moses? On record we have many other post-Mosaic Jewish prophets, such as Solomon, Isaiah, Daniel, Malachi and John the Baptist. They all were Jews and prophets.

In fact the dissimilarities between Moses and Jesus are various and obvious. The Indian Muslim scholar Sheikh Rahmat Allah al-Hindi counted ten points of difference between Moses and Jesus; later Ahmad Deedat expanded this figure to fifteen.(31) To report but a few examples: Moses had father and mother, like Muhammad, but Jesus was born miraculously. Moses and Muhammad married and begot children, but Jesus remained a bachelor all his life. Muhammad and Moses were acknowledged as prophets by their own people during their lifetime. As for Jesus,

> "He came unto his own and they that were his own received him not"
>
> (John1: 11)

Moses and Muhammad were prophets as well as rulers, and they exercised their power in their lifetime. Jesus said that his kingdom was not of this world, and he refused to pass judgment.

Moses and Muhammad brought new laws to their people. Jesus said that he came not to destroy the Torah but to fulfill it.

Both Moses and Muhammad died natural deaths, while Jesus was crucified on the cross, according to the Christian belief, and ascended to heaven according to the Qur'an and the Muslim tradition, without crucifixion.

God has not raised up a prophet from among the brethren of the Children of Israel except Muhammad.

Professor `Abd al-Ahad Dawud (formerly Reverend David Benjamin Keldani) comments on Deuteronomy 18:18 by saying, "If these words do not apply to Muhammad, they still remain unfulfilled. Jesus himself never claimed to be the prophet alluded to. Even his disciples were of the same opinion: they looked to the second coming of Jesus for the fulfillment of the prophecy (Acts 3:17-24). So far it is undisputed that the first coming of Jesus was not the advent of the Prophet like unto thee and his second advent can hardly fulfill the words. Jesus, as is believed by his Church, will appear as a Judge and not as a law-giver; but the promised one has to come with a 'fiery law' in his right hand."(32)

Moreover and more important still, the above prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:18 clearly states that God says "I will put my words in his mouth", and this again referred to the unlettered Muhammad who was taught the Qur'an by God through the agency of the Archangel Gabriel. The Qur'an was but a Revelation sent down to him. It was put into his mouth and written in his heart and mind.

Thereafter, the Qur'an was written down on anything available - palm-leaves, skins, and even on shoulder-bones - and above all thousands of Muslims committed the Qur'an to their memory, until our own time. It is very important to note that according to the verse under discussion, Prophet Muhammad came also to the Jews, and they thus have to follow him.

This is supported by the following words :

> "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of the brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken."
>
> (Deuteronomy 18: 15)

The next prophecy to deal with is Isaiah 21: 6. where we read:

> "For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman; let him declare what he seeth: And when he seeth a troop, horsemen in pairs, a troop of asses, a troop of camels, he shall hearken diligently with much heed. And he cried as a lion: O Lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I set in my ward whole nights: And, behold, here cometh a troop of men, horsemen in pairs. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground. O thou my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you."

The burden of Dumah.

> "One calleth unto me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: turn ye, come."

The burden upon Arabia.

> "In the forest of Arabia shall ye lodge. O ye traveling companies of Dedanites. Unto him that was thirsty they brought water: the inhabitants of the land of Tema did meet the fugitives with their bread. For they fled away from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war."

In this passage there is more than one indication of the coming of Prophet Muhammad, and the place where he shall come, e.g., the rider on the camel in contrast with the rider on the donkey. This refers to Jesus and to Muhammad; none of the camel riders had ever proclaimed himself as a prophet or approached Medina where the Jews lived except Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, the birthplace of Prophet Muhammad and its surroundings are mentioned in the passage.

In the same book we find also prophecies about Kedar, the great ancestor of our prophet and the son of Ishmael (peace be upon them). The prophecy also alludes to the holy sites and to the prayers of the pilgrims and their glorification of God in Mecca and its surroundings. The prophecy also speaks of the decline of Babylon and the destruction of its gods, and this only happened after the rise of Islam.

It is very interesting to note in this context that there is a Jewish apocalypse of the mid 8th century called the Secrets of Rabbi Simon Bin Yohay, which tries to explain the Islamic conquest of Palestine in Jewish terms, and in the light of Jewish experience. The apocalypse speaks of the Ishmaelite kingdom saying: "Was it not enough, what the wicked kingdom of Edom did to us, but we must have the kingdom of Ishmael too? At once Metatron the prince of the countenance answered and said: Do not fear, son of man, for the Holy

One, blessed be He, only brings the kingdom of Ishmael in order to save you from this wickedness. He raises up over them a prophet according to His will and will conquer the land for them and they will come and restore it in greatness, and there will be great terror between them and the sons of Esau. Rabbi Simon answered and said: how do we know that they are our salvation? He answered: Did not the prophet Isaiah say thus: And he saw a troop with a pair of horsemen, etc.? Why did he put the troop of asses before the troop of camels, when he need only have said: A troop of camels and a troop of asses? But when he, the rider on the camel, goes forth, the kingdom will arise through the rider on an ass. Again: a troop of asses, since he rides on an ass, shows that they are the salvation of Israel, like the salvation of the rider on an ass."(33)

It is clear from this quotation that the Ishmaelite kingdom was recognized as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, and that the Jews found their deliverance at the hands of the Muslims, but the apocalypse also speaks of the Muslims as invaders, and of Prophet Muhammad as prophet only for the Arabs, not for the whole world, and we can perceive that the writer of this apocalypse is trying to say that the Islamic kingdom was intrinsically temporary, only a step towards the messianic age which the Jews expected. Apart from this, it is clear that the learned Jews accepted Prophet Muhammad as a fulfillment of the prophecy which they expected from their Holy Book. Of course, there are some Jewish sects who believe that Muhammad was a Prophet, but only for the Arabs; this idea is rather persistent among the Jews. But if anyone believes that Muhammad is a Prophet at all, he should be accepted as such without geographical limitations.(34)

Having dealt with a few of the Old Testament references to Prophet Muhammad let us turn our attention to the New Testament. Of course, it should suffice to rely on the Old Testament prophecies, since these are believed by both Jews and Christians. But it is interesting to note that the New Testament also contains references to and prophecies of Prophet Muhammad.

New Testament prophecies concerning Muhammad

The first thing to capture our attention in the New Testament is that there are many passages referring to the coming of the Divine kingdom.

Even the word evangel or Gospel means the good news of the coming.

The preaching of good news is a substantial constituent of Jesus' teaching. Bearing this in mind, and reading in the Qur'an that Jesus foretold the coming of Muhammad by name, makes us reconsider these references in the Gospel to "good news which is to come".

First, Matthew 3:1ff. we read that John the Baptist said: "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In the same Gospel (4:12-17) we are informed that when Jesus heard that John was in prison he began to repeat John's message, "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In verse 23 Jesus was preaching the good news of the kingdom. In chapter 6 Jesus commanded the disciples to pray "Thy kingdom come." In chapter 10 he also commanded them to preach that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It is quite obvious here that Jesus followed the same line as John the Baptist in teaching that the kingdom of heaven is near; he also commanded his disciples and Apostles to preach its coming. Moreover, he told them to pray to God to hasten its coming.

This means that the subject matter of the above foretelling was not Jesus himself nor anyone or anything of his own time, nor was it something his power to accomplish, he would not have said that it was "at hand" or "near" using exactly the same words as John, his contemporary.

It is crystal clear from the above passages that both Jesus and John the Baptist foretold the coming of the kingdom of God, and prayed to God for its coming. In our view the kingdom of God means the Islamic kingdom, established, fostered and ruled by Prophet Muhammad. The Islamic kingdom is godly since it acknowledges no separation between so-called secularism and religion. In other words, the kingdom of God on earth is a religion, a powerful community of believers in one God, equipped with faith and forces or power to fight for its existence and absolute independence against the kingdom of darkness, against all those who oppose the will of God and misrepresent Him.

Here I would like to point out that Christians are in error concerning the concept of the kingdom of God spoken of by Jesus. Even the Apostolic writers failed to understand it, to the point that they avoided the usage of the terms "king" and "kingdom" of God in their writings.

The Christians are divided concerning the nature and position of that kingdom. Is it eschatological? Is it a spiritual or political organization? Is it national or universal? Is it the Church or the Christian community in general? Or is it the company of the newborn and sinless Christians washed and cleansed with the blood of the lamb of God, Jesus, as the salvationists or Quakers believe? Does this kingdom exist in this world or in another? If it is in this world, did it ever manifest itself or is it still to come? Or will it, as some modern

Christian theologians have fancied, emerge out of this world that we know after the world has developed under the Christian influence? This is to illustrate how the Christians are in confusion about the concept and position of the kingdom of God and its function.

Finally the kingdom of God must mean the Muslim *Ummah*, Community or Nation and Sovereignty. Jesus' annunciation of the kingdom of God to come should be understood in contrast with the ungodly pagan Romans. The Islamic kingdom is for all people and all people are equal in its domain.

As early as Ibn Ishaq (85-151 A. H.) the biographer of Prophet Muhammad, the Muslims identified the Paraclete - referred to in John's Gospel only three times (14:26; 15:26; 16:13) even though the concept is referred to a fourth time with the Prophet Muhammad. Ibn Ishaq refers to John 15:26, " But when the comforter (Paraclete) is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me."

And then he says: "The Munahhemana (God bless and preserve him) in Syriac is Muhammad in Greek; he is the Paraclete."(35)

Ibn Hazm takes it for granted that the Paraclete referred to in John's Gospel (14:16), in which Jesus prayed to God "to give his followers another Paraclete that may be with them forever" is none other than Muhammad.

The phrase "another Paraclete" implies that Jesus himself was a Paraclete sent by God. This is to say that the Paraclete is not the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God as the Christians wished it to be. The description and function given to the Paraclete in John's Gospel are characteristically of a prophet, not of the Holy Spirit. If this be so,

Jesus was a prophet, just as he is called prophet once and again in the four gospels.

Here I would like to emphasize that the word "another" in Jesus' statement cannot in any way apply to the Holy Spirit, since there is one Holy Spirit only, not two or more. Thus it is out of context to say that Jesus asked God to send another Holy Spirit.

It is most important to point out that Jesus defined the activities of the coming Paraclete, a prophet, as being to teach his followers all things, to bring to their remembrance all that he said, and to bear witness of him.

By definition Prophet Muhammad was the only prophet to come after Jesus and bear witness of him. It has already been mentioned that Jesus is called in the Qur'an a word from God, a spirit from Him and prophet of God. Prophet Muhammad gave the exact and true picture of Jesus and has reminded the Christians of the real message that Jesus brought from God which they have forgotten. The Revelation given to Prophet Muhammad is called *Dhikr* and *Tadhkirah*, remembrance or an aid to help one recall to his mind the things which have been forgotten, Prophet Muhammad himself is also called *Mudhakkir*, reminder.(36)

God says:

> ﴿*This We recite to thee of signs and wise remembrance. Truly, the likeness of Jesus, in God's Sight, is as Adam's likeness; He created him of dust, then said He unto him, "Be", and he was. The truth is of God; be not of the doubters.*﴾
>
> (3: 58-60)

God says:

﴾ *Taha. We have not sent down the Qur'an upon thee for thee to be unprosperous, but only as a reminder to him who fears, a Revelation from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens.* ﴿

(20: 1-4)

God says:

﴾ *What, do they not consider how the camels were created, how heaven was lifted up, how the mountains were hoisted, how the earth was outstretched? Then remind them! Thou art only a reminder; thou art not charged to oversee them.* ﴿

(88: 17-22)

God says:

﴾ *Recite what has been revealed to thee of the Book of thy Lord, no man can change His words. Apart from Him, thou wilt find no refuge. And restrain yourself with those who call upon their Lord at morning and evening desiring His countenance, and let not thine eyes turn away from them, desiring the adornment of the present life; and obey not him whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance so that he follows his own lust, and his affair has become all excess. Say: The truth is from your Lord; so let whosoever will believe, and let whosoever will disbelieve.* ﴿

(18: 27-29)

God also says that those who do not follow His commandments pay no attention to His reminding Revelation:

﴾ *... Then whosoever follows My guidance shall not go astray, neither shall he be unprosperous, but whosoever turns away from*

My remembrance, his shall be a life of narrowness, and on the Resurrection Day We shall raise him blind. He shall say: O my Lord, why hast thou raised me blind, and I was wont to see? God shall say: Even so it is. Our signs came unto thee, and thou didst forget them; and so today thou art forgotten.

(20:123-126)

The Muslims believe that the Qur'an contains all things concerning life and afterlife. The Qur'an is the final word of God to man. Prophet Muhammad was indeed foretold in the preceding sacred books, specifically in the *Injil*, Gospel, where Jesus proclaimed him by name as Ahmad. This admits no compromise.

CHAPTER THREE

The Nature and Authority of the Qur'an

Muslims believe that the Qur'an in its entirety is the words of God revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) over a long period of time, and that the Qur'an was well safeguarded against any form of corruption and alteration.

There are many proofs that the Qur'an is God's Revelation. Here I will summarize the most important evidences. Firstly, Prophet Muhammad distinguished clearly and sharply between his own words and the words of God. At no time did he ascribe the Qur'an to himself, although it would have been an honor to be able to claim the authorship of such a unique Book.

Secondly, the Prophet was keen to write down the text of the Qur'an immediately after he received it from God. To ensure the distinction between his own words and the word of God, he warned people not to write down his own prophetic utterances so that they would not be mixed in with God's words. Muhammad even commanded people to erase anything they had written of his own sayings that was not part of the Qur'an.

Thirdly, his reception of the Qur'an from God was accompanied by psychological and physical changes in himself: his face flushed and his

body trembled and sweated. This was observed by those present. But, in contrast, when he spoke of his own accord, no such things happened. If he were an ordinary author, there would not have been this contrast in the effect on his mind and body according to what he was writing. A man could change from writing prose to writing poetry without such visible effects. And if we look back at the Prophet's life before he was given the Revelations, he did not experience any such changes.

In this context, I should like to say that some who have been interested in analyzing these changes in the Prophet diagnosed him as an epileptic. They forgot that the Prophet was fully aware of what he was saying, and could recall the whole experience afterwards. We do not need to dwell on their theory, since it is now wholly discountenanced.

Fourthly, God's speech is distinctive and does not resemble Muhammad's own words, if we compare the two. Even when Muhammad's words reach the zenith of human rhetoric, they do not compare with words of the Qur'an. The Qur'an compared with them is like the sun compared with the stars.

Fifthly, the Qur'an is miraculous, unlike Muhammad's own sayings. All people, and even demons, were challenged to produce anything equal to the Qur'an[1] but nobody was challenged to equal Muhammad's *hadith*.

From the very beginning, Muslims were fully aware of the distinction between God's words and Muhammad's words. They introduce God's words with, "God says..." and Muhammad's *hadith*s with "The Prophet says..."

Sixthly, Muslims distinguish between the words of God and the words of the Prophet when they read them out. They use a different tone for the word of God.

The Prophet described some of his Companions as "sweet-voiced" when they read the Qur'an. And he himself often asked them to read to him from it. Once he was passing by Abu Musa al-Ash`ari's house and heard him reading the Qur'an. He stopped to listen. The Prophet was attracted by his voice. During Morning Prayer when they met, the Prophet told him he had listened to his recitation the previous night. The man said, "If I had known that you were listening I could have read even more beautifully for you."(2) The man's voice was naturally sweet.

Once, the Prophet asked Ibn Mas`ud to read the Qur'an for him. The latter said to the Prophet, "Should I read it to you when it was revealed to you?" The Prophet replied, "*I love to hear it from the lips of others.*"

Ibn Mas`ud read the chapter concerning women for the Prophet. When he read the following verse:

> ﴾*How then shall it be, when we bring forward from every nation a witness, and bring thee (O Muhammad) to witness against those?*﴿
>
> (Qur'an 4: 41)

The Prophet asked him to stop saying, "*That is enough.*" Then the reciter looked at the Prophet's face and saw that his eyes were full of tears.(3)

This clearly demonstrates not only the distinction between the Qur'an and the *hadith* of the Prophet, but also the exactness of Muslims' learning of the Qur'an.

The transmission and authenticity of the Qur'an

Western man, despite being brought up in the orthodoxies of Christianity, is nevertheless wholly unaware of the Qur'an. There have

been several translations of the Qur'an into European languages, a fact which exhibits and proves Western intellectual interest in the Qur'an. The first Latin translation appeared circa 1143, after which several others followed.[4] However, even the quickest glance at these translations reveals that the Qur'an has been misunderstood and what is more misrepresented. With these texts as his only source of reference, it is not surprising that the Western man has an inadequate and misguided view of the Qur'an, and perhaps of Islam itself. I must add that this is in no way a challenge to his sources of reference.

On the question of translation it is interesting to note that within the Muslim Community the Qur'an is read predominantly in its original Arabic. This despite the fact that by no means all Muslims speak Arabic as their mother tongue. Indeed, the language of the Qur'an, as revealed to Prophet Muhammad, can be regarded as untranslatable. There has always been, amongst Muslims, a drive to understand the Qur'an in its original, to understand as nearly as possible its message and teachings as they were revealed to the Prophet. In this context I would like to note in passing that the notion of translation is generally vexed, but it is clear that the change from one language to another, in almost any form of text, involves subtle, hidden or at worst mistaken changes in meaning. All languages have their own structures and systems of meaning dependent on culturally-based or individually-recognized forces. Language is to a degree, not directly and purely translatable.

When applied to a holy text, translation also implies the mind of man operating on the word of God. By extension one could argue that to translate the word of God means to adapt, by varying degrees, His message.

I would like to illustrate this with reference to the Torah. The Torah was rewritten by Ezra in Babylonian characters which could be understood by the Jews of the time. There were also many Targums or paraphrases of the Torah among the Jews. We have the LXX or Septuagint, which is in Greek and which differs from the Hebrew Torah on very serious matters.(5) With regard to Jesus, it is established that as a Jew he spoke Aramaic, and thus he must have received his Gospel in that language. It is evident that he conversed in Aramaic with his followers, only a few expressions of his survived in Aramaic (Mark 5:41, 7:34, 15 = 34 Matt 27:46). No more of the original Gospel has been preserved in the original language. In this context it should be noted that the speech of the man on the cross in Mt. 15:34 and Mt. 27:46 could not have come from Jesus according to Islam, which makes the surviving Aramaic Fragments even smaller. In some other verses, Jesus' speech conveys isolated Aramaic words like "Corbon" and "Abba".

Having said this I would like to turn my attention to the Qur'an as a text. One of our great authorities on the Qur'an, Abu `Ubaydah Ma`mar ibn al-Muthanna (d. 210 A.H.), in his book *The Rhetoric of the Qur'an* defines the Qur'an as "the Book of God particularly", and asserts that "no other book can be called the same". He explains that this is so because it gathers together all the *Sura*s (chapters). And he remarks that he derives his definition from the Qur'an itself. That is why the Qur'an cannot be ascribed to any human: it is the Book of God.(6)

The Qur'an was in no way mediated or filtered by the human mind, which is to say that no human word was added to it. Prophet Muhammad alone received it from Gabriel, who brought it to him from God. The message was transmitted by word of mouth, not in

written form. The Prophet received the message as the verbatim word of God, in a process of sequential Revelation. The context of time and place and human need was required as the message was revealed at different time and places according to the plan of God. On the death of Prophet Muhammad, the Revelation was concluded and completed, and the process of transcription ended.

After this, not a book, passage, word or syllable was added to it - the Revelation was then total. It is useful to sharpen the proof of the authenticity of the Qur'an with reference to the death of Prophet Muhammad. In the Pentateuch the death of Moses was interpolated by human hands and represents a corruption of the text; "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord." (Deuteronomy 34:5).

Concerning the Qur'an, however, the death of Prophet Muhammad - a most grievous loss to the faithful - was not inserted in the Qur'an. This point helps to illustrate the degree to which the original and unique authenticity of the Qur'an is, and has been, upheld. Furthermore, in contrast to the Pentateuch, and the Old Testament in general, the time and place references of the Qur'an are all of Muhammad's time or before. I say this because in the Pentateuch the variations of time and location, especially with regard to what is "future time", indicate quite clearly an editorial hand or hands. This point helps further to highlight the authenticity of the Qur'an.(7)

It is instructive to note that at a later date some irreligious people tried to invent traditions that were falsely ascribed to Prophet Muhammad. These falsely innovatory traditions were numerous and they are known to Muslims as *Ahadith Mawdu`ah.* The Muslim scholars are quite aware of these false traditions. Yet scholarship has helped to clarify the strict dichotomy between what is genuine and

what is false. Now these falsehoods are regarded as insignificant and separate from authentic Muslim orthodoxy.

The inventors of these false *hadiths* forced Muslim scholarship to develop criteria by which traditions might be evaluated and sifted in terms of their genuineness. This academic activity is representative of the Muslim character of mind in general. To a Muslim, "authenticity" is an extremely important quality and traditions or other so-called religious activity which does not bear its stamp must be rejected.(8)

By way of contrast to the criteria of authentication applied to the traditions, it may be said that no such criteria has been developed for the Qur'an itself. This may sound surprising at first, but when one considers the nature of the Qur'an such procedures become irrelevant.

Despite the history of false traditions, there has been no attempt to add to, edit, or in any way alter the original message. Irreligious activity has not been visited upon a text which has always been regarded as sacred and immune from corruption. Furthermore, one might add that with the worldwide distribution of the Qur'an, the nature of Muslim scholarship and the already mentioned regard for authenticity as of supreme importance, any adaptation of the text would have been a spiritual travesty and is a practical impossibility. The impossibility of any additions can be underlined by the fact that from the time of its appearance the Qur'an was widely memorized - so belonging as it did to the collective memory of Muslims, the opportunity for change was immediately precluded.

The authenticity of the Qur'an rests on two major principles: firstly, what might be called the superintendence of God Himself. God, as the Revealer of the Qur'an revealed that He Himself would safeguard the purity of His Revelation, and protect it from corruption.

In the Qur'an 15:9, God says: ﴾*It is We Who have sent down the reminding Qur'an, and certainly We safeguard it (against corruption).*﴿[9]

Secondly, is the infallibility of Prophet Muhammad, the receiver and conveyor of the Qur'an. Given this, the Revelation, its reception and conveyance can all be seen as beyond corruption.

Perhaps one may wonder why such a guarantee is applied to the Qur'an and not other books, which according to the Qur'an are of the same nature and in which Muslims believe. However, take for example the Torah which is itself, or rather was itself, the word of God. As the word of God should it not have remained uncorrupted? But it is quite clear that it has not. The fact that this is so must be regarded as the product of human weakness and disobedience to God's command. This type of corruption, the failure to protect the words of God, in parallel with the failure to protect His prophets - the Israelites killed some of them - is essentially a failure of humanity and not of God.

I emphasize that the Qur'an, as a universal and final Revelation and container of the essential teachings of the previous books, is self-evidently worthy of God's guarantee against corruption.

I would now like to give some more information about how the Qur'an was safeguarded against corruption and still is as pure as it was when revealed.

As evidence for this we may look into the character and life history of Prophet Muhammad. This discussion will also draw upon other facts and elements relevant to the subject. These will be taken from the spheres of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, history and theology.

Concerning Prophet Muhammad, historical evidence witnesses that in the time of Prophet Muhammad there was much tribal conflict and internal dispute within the pre-Islamic Community. Yet, historical evidence also shows that Muhammad was unanimously and irrefutably accepted as trustworthy, even before his appointment as Prophet. He was known simply as *as-Sadiq al-Amin*, the truthful one and trustworthy one. Despite widespread factional dispute, the judgment of Muhammad came to be accepted by all the tribes, even when such judgment may have been contrary to the worldly or political aspiration of those concerned.(10)

This recognition of Muhammad as true and trustworthy goes beyond the Arab pagans to some Arab Christian priests. Waraqah ibn Nawfal, for example, upon hearing of the Revelation given to Muhammad in the cave of Hira' recognized the Revelation as the authentic word of God.(11) Moreover, when `A'ishah, the wife of the Prophet, was asked about her husband's character and conduct, she answered that his conduct was exactly in accordance with the Qur'an.(12) Muhammad's soul was pure and his heart empty of anything except truth. He led a very simple life, free from all worldly temptation and material ambitions, which can weaken the mind and distract one from the straight path. Free from such diversions, the Prophet was able to direct his energy to the task of memorizing and transmitting the Qur'an. The intellectual effort and unceasing motivation to achieve this must, in part, have been a product of his single-minded and simple life style.

He received the Revelation at the age of forty, an age at which the intellect and judgment, tempered by experience, combine to produce wisdom and humanity. At this point I would like to mention that I do not distinguish between Prophet Muhammad and the other Prophets -

I am a Muslim and I believe in all Prophets[13] - nor do I make invidious comparisons between them. I am, however, concerned with the character of Muhammad as a major guarantee of the authenticity of the Qur'an.

Muhammad received the Qur'an and conveyed it five verses at a time, five by five. He immediately called upon his scribes, Muhammad himself being unlettered; thus, the time between the reception of the Revelation and its transcription was very short. The Qur'an was recorded on papyrus, flat stones, palm-leaves, pieces of leather and wooden boards, as well as in the hearts of men. We also have evidence that Prophet Muhammad ordered the Qur'anic passages to be written down immediately - this is according to al-Muhasibi (d. 243 A.H, 853 A.C.).[14] It is also recorded that Muhammad's Companions immediately committed the verses to memory five at a time and continually practiced them. To exemplify how the Qur'an was written during Muhammad's lifetime, I would like to add the following: It is reported that the Prophet said to his cousin, "*`Ali, the Qur'an is behind my bed written in a scroll silk and sheets. You take it and collect it, and do not destroy it as the Jews destroyed the Torah.*" `Ali went and collected it in a yellow garment and sealed it.[15] This is supported by al-Bukhari, who reported in his *Sahih* that a man came from Iraq to ask `A'ishah, the wife of the Prophet, "Show me your Book of the Qur'an." The narrator of this tradition informed us of this saying that she got the Book out and dictated to him the verses concerned.[16]

During the time of Ibn `Abbas, there arose the question of whether the Qur'an could be transcribed for commercial gain. The latter's disciple wrote hundreds of copies of the Qur'an.[17]

The Qur'an was read in written form shortly after the Revelation. This is clear from the story of the conversion of `Umar to Islam, when he found his sister Fatimah with her husband reading the beginning of Surat Taha (Qur'an 20), which they intended to keep secret from `Umar when he entered the house. There are several traditions which forbid the Muslims to go to enemy countries with a copy of the Qur'an.(18) In the conflict between two Muslim parties, one of the two parties put pages of the Qur'an on their spears.(19) This story indicates that copies of the Qur'an were already numerous.

According to Ibn Hazm there were at least 100,000 copies of the Qur'an produced in the beginning of the reign of `Uthman, the third Caliph, about 25 years after the death of Muhammad.(20) The non-Muslim scholars who have studied the Qur'an unfortunately have started from the wrong position, and have used the wrong methods to criticize the Qur'an. In many cases they are weighing precious stones on scales meant for gravel. For instance, they use techniques developed in Bible criticism to criticize the Qur'an when it is something quite different. They ignore the different background and circumstances of each Book.

Here I can say a little to bring into focus the background and circumstances of the Qur'an as scripture. The Qur'an was revealed over a long period of time, over twenty years. It was put to immediate use among a settled community. The evidence for this is multiple and needs no repeating. The Prophet did not die before Islam had spread through the whole of Arabia, Yemen, Bahrain and that area. Mosques were built, and the Qur'an was widely read and copied, even in every village or Bedouin camp.

The Qur'an was taught in schools as Islam spread. The Muslim children sat and learned in every corner where Islam reached. From the beginning, the Qur'an formed the basis of learning and education.

The situation was such under Abu Bakr, the first Muslim Caliph. The Qur'an was spreading as a written text and in oral form. Even when some Arabs rebelled against Islam in the time of Abu Bakr, they did not completely renounce Islam, but only refused to obey the command to give alms. There is no evidence that they refused to obey Muhammad or burned the Qur'an or attacked it. There were only a few of them, and they were soon restored to Islam.

The Qur'an continued to spread and Qur'anic schools were set up everywhere. As an example to illustrate this, I may refer to a great Muslim scholar of the second Muslim generation, Ibn `Amir, who was the judge of Damascus under the Caliph `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz. It is reported that in his school for teaching the Qur'an there were 400 disciples to teach in his absence.(21) If there were teachers 400 in just one place, imagine the number of students that they taught, and how many there must have been in all the other cities, towns and villages.

The following *hadith* helps us greatly to visualize the concern shown by Muslims for the Qur'an: Malik ibn `Awf reported, "While we were sitting with the Prophet, he informed us about how God will take away all our knowledge before the Day of Judgment. Ziyad asked the Prophet, 'How will God take away our knowledge, when the Book of God is with us, and we have taught it to our children and women?'" Here the man is expressing amazement that knowledge can be taken away from them when even the children and women have learned it by heart.

Indeed, there were many women who memorized the Qur'an. The earliest of them, perhaps, was Umm Waraqah, who was permitted by Prophet Muhammad to be the Imam of her family, i.e., to lead her family in Prayer, both men and women.(22) In this context it should be noted that Islam considered memorization of the Qur'an a necessary qualification for the imamate caliphate and other posts.

It becomes absolutely clear that the Qur'an has had an all-pervading influence on the Islamic Community. It gave rise to many phenomenal scholars who memorized the complete text. As we have noted, those who memorized it also memorized secular texts which might appear unrelated. Islamic education draws no line between religious knowledge and practical knowledge.

It is needless to bring to the reader's attention that Islam and the Muslim State were established during the life of Prophet Muhammad himself. With Muhammad as a leader, the state was run strictly according to the Revelation of God. As such the Qur'an became the basis of a state and the supreme criterion of judgment. It manifested itself not only as an authentic text but as the authentic and workable basis of a society. It attained a theological, spiritual and social reality as a coherent and all-embracing truth.

It is interesting to compare the position with the Bible. The Bible is available in 286 different languages. In Japan, less than one percent of the inhabitants are professing Christians, but nevertheless more than 150 million copies of the Japanese Bible have been sold in the last few years. In West Germany the Bible is outsold only by atlases and cookery books. However, it may be estimated that out of every hundred people who possess a Bible, only fifteen actually read it. In the words of Manfred Barthel, "The good book seems rapidly to be achieving the status of piece of bookshelf bric-a-brac, or at best an attractive bookend". The same writer goes on to say that a copy of the Bible can even be bought in supermarkets, or it can be removed and taken away from a drawer in a hotel room without giving rise to any feeling of guilt. In some places one can put a coin in a vending machine and get a pocket Gospel for holiday-makers.

The spoken word of the Bible is also widely available on record and cassette. Cereal boxes are decorated with extracts from the Bible in America. Having said this, Manfred Barthel continues, "All this does not change the essential fact that though virtually no other book has been as widely disseminated as the Bible it remains a book that comparatively few readers seem willing to open - in short, a best-seller that no one reads."[23]

The Qur'an, unlike other sacred books, was commonly read by all Muslims without discrimination or restriction, rich or poor, men, women or children, are commanded to read and memorize it, for God will reward them for every single letter they memorize. The Qur'an was not forbidden to anyone to hold, read, memorize or quote (except for temporary bans during periods of uncleanness, such as for women during menstruation and up to forty days following childbirth, and for all after sexual intercourse). This even applied to non-Muslim Arabs, and many non-Muslims have learnt passages by heart. Muslim children memorize the Qur'an in a very early stage of their life.

No Muslim authority can claim to be the sole possessor of the Qur'an. It does not belong to a group of priests, as the Torah did in Judaism where the rabbi would unroll the scroll and read from it, and then the people would disperse. The Torah and the other Jewish books were kept by the higher Aramaid priests in the temple in Jerusalem, and the public were forbidden to own copies or even to read it. It was solely the business of the priest. The priest himself did not memorize the text but read it. We have already said something about the vulnerability of the Temple and the Torah to attack and destruction by enemies.[24] Hava Lazarus refers to Ibn Hazm who used this evidence against the authenticity of the Pentateuch and says, "He was skillfully using a rather absent ancient Jewish Tradition."

According to Ibn Hazm only one copy of the Pentateuch was usually kept by the High Aaronid priests in the Temple in Jerusalem; where the people could go only three times a year, most of them never entering it. This went on for four hundred years, during which time the corrupted Levite Priests might have easily altered the text of the holy scriptures. In paranthesis Hava expresses wonder, if not shock, at the claim made by Ibn Hazm and some Christian critics, as to the honesty and reliability of the High Aaronid priests. As to the possibility of introducing corruption into the Pentateuth.

She emphasized that according to Ibn Hazm's citation of Deutoronomy 31:22 which states that Moses wrote down only one copy for all of the Israelites and taught it to them. Hava Lazarus thinks that Ibn Hazm partly based his argument on a "negative version of the Rabbinic Tradition," that one authoritative copy of the Pentateuch was deposited by Moses in the Ark, as a standard copy to be referred to in time of dispute, so as to secure it against any forgeries or interpolations.(25)

In order to support her argument Hava sought refuge in some Midrashic sources, according to which Moses wrote on the last day of his life thirteen scrolls of the Torah in his own hand, and gave one copy to each of the twelve tribes and one which deposited in the Ark to be used as the prototype copy.

Hava's argument goes back to Maivronedes the Andalusian Jewish Philosopher poet and exponent of the Torah and Jewish Tradition. In his introduction to the *Mishreb Torah*, Maimonedes used the Midrashic legend mentioned above to defend the genuineness of the Hebrew scriptures against Ibn Hazm's criticism of the Pentateuch.

One wonders how a mortal man could have written thirteen copies of the life books of the Torah, in a single day, and in the last of his

life. And he was a very old man; was lived the last years of his life struggling against the super power of Pharaoh and the strong-leaders of the Israelites; as witnessed by the Torah if not by the Qur'an and Christian scriptures. There is still room for us to wonder, how in the absence of stability and security.

How Moses could have had the material resources to turn out such volume and industry of writing. And here we must stop to wonder in puzzle and amazement how Moses, according to Jewish Tradition, could have written in one day what was revealed to him in forty days!

If we look at the gospels, we find that many appeared about a century after Jesus. It was not until 367 A.C. that Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria clamped down on the flexibility of sacred Christian books, canonizing twenty-seven of them into an accepted body of texts.(26) We have no exact information about the date, provenance and writers of the four canonical gospels. Many other gospels were banned and destroyed. Add to this the fact that these officially accepted gospels were not in any event widely read or known to the public.

It is interesting to note that the passages of the Bible cited in the early writings of the Church Fathers are not always accurately quoted. The Old Testament is referred to about nine hundred times in the New Testament, including about 250 direct quotations. These quotations are usually inaccurate.(27)

The Qur'an is read as part of Muslim daily Prayers, and also as part of the long night Prayers of the pious, (*Tahajjud*). No Prayer is accepted without reading from the Qur'an. In fact, the word "prayer" means more or less reading from the Qur'an. The reading from the Qur'an in worship must be in Arabic, and according to the Qur'an's order, in chapter and verse, unless the person praying is ignorant or unable to use Arabic.

In that case it is permissible to use any language until Arabic is learned. In Muslim worship there are no hymns, songs, or music of any kind. This is to enable the worshiper to concentrate his attention on the Qur'an. This is in itself helps to preserve the text against change or alteration through forgetfulness or destruction. It also helps develop the skill of recitation among the professional reciters who have become a phenomenon in our human history.

Because the Qur'an is read frequently, regularly and widely, and because the reading is itself an act of worship, it preserves its integrity. It would be thus absurd to attempt to cast doubt on its authenticity on the assumption that the Qur'an was not mentioned by historians at the time of its origins.[(28)] Especially since there were no Arabian historians contemporary to its Revelation. Such an argument would be like saying that the Himalayas were not there because early writers do not mention them, or that Egypt is only known to have existed because Herodotus mentions it.

To sum up, one might say that Islam means Qur'an, and Qur'an means Islam.

The Qur'an: Orientation of and influence on the Muslim mind

Memorization of the Qur'an by thousands of Muslims helps sharpen their intellect and their power of memorizing. They achieve great feats of memorizing even before the age of nine years, learning not only sacred texts but also secular texts. There are records of many Muslim scholars who knew Aristotle's texts by heart, and the medical text of Galen, and other such books.

It is nothing short of staggering to realize that the Muslim scholar al-Anbari even memorized the figures in the accounts of the state

treasury. The story goes that a certain small sum was once unaccounted for in the treasury. This scholar was able to tell them from memory where the amount had been entered, and his statement was confirmed as true by investigating the written records.(29)

Another scholar, Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Abdari (d. 626 A.H.) memorized all the theories of Euclid including the figures illustrating them.(30)

Ibn Khaldun, a very well known scholar and pioneer of sociology, tells us that he memorized the Qur'an, the *hadiths*, the sayings of ancient Arab men of letters, the two long poems about the Qur'an written by ash-Shatibi, and other books of jurisprudence, logic and morality.(31)

Ibn al-Anbari (d. 328 A.H.), called the "Sheikh" of men of letters, used to dictate texts from memory, quoting all the sources as he did so. Adh-Dhahabi described him as "unique in all times in his ability to memorize, and in what he memorized. Moreover, he was truthful, religious and devoted."(32)

Abu `Ali al-Qali states that Ibn al-Anbari memorized 300,000 verses of Arabic poetry, useful for interpretation of the language of the Qur'an. People noticed that he never dictated from a written source, only from memory. Once he was asked how many books he had memorized. He replied, "Thirteen large boxes full."(33)

Finally, we would like to say that memorizing the Qur'an sharpens the intellect and safeguards the text, preventing slackness and abuse.

More examples can be given here of how the Qur'an works to shape Muslim Society, and how Muslims have been greatly concerned with what the Qur'an says. Ibn `Abbas memorized all the *Muhkam* verses when he was 10 years old, during the lifetime of the Prophet.(34)

ASh-Shafi`i memorized it at the age of seven, or as some say, nine. He memorized the book of Malik in Hadith when he was 10 years old. Ash-Shafi`i himself realized that he had an extraordinary memorizing ability. When he was at school and heard the teacher telling another student a verse he memorized it before the other one did.[35] Qatadah (61-118 A.H.) memorized the Qur'an and the *Hadith*, and again he himself realized that this was an exceptional achievement. He said of himself, "I have never had to ask any one talking to me to say the same thing twice. And my ears never heard anything without my heart storing it up."[36]

Ad-Dani (d. 440 A.H.) was one of the most distinguished scholars of the Qur'an and Qur'anic interpretation and Arabic grammar. He says much the same about himself, "I never saw anything without writing it down, and I never wrote anything down without memorizing it. I never memorized anything without learning it forever."[37]

As-Suri (died 410 A.H.), who in his own time was the most learned man in Muslim tradition, was often occupied in writing the *Hadith* according to al-Baji. As-Suri wrote al-Bukhari's *Sahih* on seven rolls of paper from Baghdad, and he had only one eye. People said of him that he had told them, "Give me any *hadith* and you read the text, I will give you the authority, or vice versa".[38] In other words he had complete knowledge of the *Hadith*. We have a similar story recorded about al-Bukhari. Ibn Zuhr, known in the West as Avenzoor, the distinguished physician of the Middle Ages, who died in 1162 A. C. had memorized al-Bukhari's *Sahih*, its text and authorities, Abu Hanifa's book about plants, and Galen's books about medicine and anatomy. It should be noted that Ibn Zuhr's book about medicine called *At-Taysir* was translated into Latin in 1280 A.C. and later into several European languages, and remained a medical reference book

for a long time. Moreover Ibn Zuhr was the first to discover stomach cancer.[39] On record we have many other examples.

Ibn Faurrah is reported to have memorized a camel-load of books.[40] In our time this sounds like a fairy tale or exaggeration, but this is something which I know from personal experience. I memorized the Qur'an at an early age, when I was about nine years old. Our readers may imagine that memorizing like this is merely mechanical, with no understanding or creative ability. This would be a wrong reaction. On the contrary, such people were also critical and creative. They pioneered literary criticism and they laid the foundation of later schools of criticism. Their ideas still hold good in our own time and are still regarded as important and as a point of reference to guide us in our modern attempts at criticism.

The books of *At-Tabaqat* (*al-Huffaz*), dealing with these exceptional memorizers, usually introduce or comment on each figure by saying, "He memorized with understanding. He has great powers of memorizing, great intellect and great creativity." The leading traditionalists say that memorizing and understanding belong together. Mere mechanical repetition is useless as an authority.[41]

It becomes clear that the Qur'an is the words of God given to Prophet Muhammad via the agency of the Archangel Gabriel, and thus to man through the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Qur'an was well safeguarded against corruption and alteration. The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, was written down during the life of the Prophet, and is often read in its Arabic original worldwide. The Qur'anic teachings are for all mankind without distinction.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Gospels As Individual Books

The entry under Ibn Hazm in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*[1] states that his motive for writing was to reveal the corruption of the gospels. This suggests that Ibn Hazm's attitudes were colored by a desire to prove an a priori point. On the contrary, Ibn Hazm's introduction to *Al-Faisal* is an unambiguous statement of intention to approach his material, not merely as a Muslim dogmatist, but also as an objective historian of religion. He actually criticizes religious writers who, in his view, have failed to achieve positive and unbiased results, and have committed the faults of either prolixity or excessive density and in so doing have done justice neither to their own standpoint nor to their critics. It is absolutely clear from the introduction that Ibn Hazm's studies of religious scholarship led him towards a personal ideal of scholarship which would avoid the weaknesses he noted in other works. This ideal was one of exactitude of objectivity and of the eschewing of a purely dogmatic line of approach. *The Encyclopedia of Islam* is, thus, not wholly substantiated by the facts.

The basis of Ibn Hazm's comments on the gospels as individual books, which will be the theme of this chapter is, consequently, characterized by a degree of historical objectivity. His concentration on the gospels as source material is an historian's choice which, he

implies, is made from lack of material elsewhere when he comments that Josephus's (c.37 - c.100) account of Jesus was limited, and that "with the exception of the account of John the Baptist on whose activities as a baptizer he passes no comment", Josephus "did not mention anything else about Jesus, Son of Mary."[2] The fact that Ibn Hazm refers only to Josephus on John the Baptist is, incidentally, an important piece of evidence in support of the view that the passages on James and Jesus are additions of later authorship.[3]

Ibn Hazm's definition of the four gospels

The author of *Al-Faisal* regards the four gospels as four biographical works written by four known men, at different times.[4] He emphasizes the biographical nature of the gospels by introducing each one with the formula *Tarikh Allafahu* meaning "history, written by". The gospels are not attacked by Ibn Hazm only on the grounds that there are four of them, an argument put forward by R. Arnaldez,[5] but because of discrepancies between their accounts and their lack of credibility, which will be discussed in detail later. For Ibn Hazm the four gospels are not inspired, but corrupted, books written by four individuals, a viewpoint which, he goes on to say, is shared by all Christian sects.[6] Unfortunately his terms are slightly ambiguous, i.e., it is not clear whether he wants to say that all Christians of that date are in agreement about the authorship of the four gospels and the entire New Testament collection as traditionally stated, or that the consensus of opinion of Christians is that the four gospels are not inspired but it seems that Ibn Hazm probably only meant that all Christians regard them as written by four individuals, with all the possibility of contradiction that implies. Since it was generally held by Christians that the spirit of God had dictated the books of the New Testament; several examples may be quoted to illustrate this. Firstly,

the biblical source often used as a basis for the belief in biblical inspiration is to be found in 2 Tim. 3:16: "All scripture is inspired by God", and 2 Pet. 1:21: "Because no prophecy ever come by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." Secondly, as Streeter points out, the Muratorian fragment, which seems to represent the official view of the Roman Church in about A.C. 200. The Muratorian fragment is now believed by many to date from 300-350 A. C. (or C. E.), not 200, and this later dating is almost certainly correct as nothing but the four gospels had been agreed upon by 200, which is still the time of Irenaeus. Canon making is more reflective of the time of Eusebius (d. 340 C. E.). See Eusebius's canon and compare it with the Muratorian fragment, while recognizing distinctions between the apostles, implies an overriding inspired source. Streeter says, "It was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John was to write all things in his own name, and they were all to certify them. And therefore, though various elements are taught in the several books of the Gospel, yet it makes no difference to the faith of believers, since by one guiding Spirit all things are declared in all of them.[7] Thirdly, Origen (c.185 - 254 A.C.) and Gregory of Nazianus (329 - 389 A.C.) believed that the activity of the Divine will was discernible in the minutiae of the sacred books, a reaction with which Ibn Hazm would disagree, since it would allow the text to bear almost any interpretation. As Origen said, "There is not one jot or tittle written in the Bible which does not accomplish its special work for those capable of using it".[8] Fourthly, Gregory the Great (c.540 - 604 A.C.) clearly referred to God as the author of the sacred scripture, the human factor in the production of the scripture being called the writer.[9] In this he was followed by Isidore of Seville (c.560 - 636 A.C.) and Rabanus Maurus (776/84 - 856 A.C.) until the phrase "God the author of scripture" became universal.[10]

Ricoldo (c.1243 - 1320 A.C.) regarded the contradictions between the gospels as dictated by the Holy Spirit, and thus not essentially contradictory.[11] Since in other parts of *Al-Faisal* Ibn Hazm explicitly states that Christians regard the gospels as inspired,[12] it is unlikely that he intended to suggest otherwise in the case mentioned above.

In *Al-Usul Wa Al-Furu`* he clarifies this point: Concerning what is in the gospels, they assume that they are written by four (writers). Two of them were Apostles, Matthew and John, the others were not. Luke was the disciple of Peter, and Mark. They assume that those (gospels) had come to them from their writers through an unbroken chain of authority. In their view the writers of the gospels are infallible, higher in status than prophets.[13]

The Christian theory of inspiration prevailed until the early eighteenth century, but towards the close of that century men began to question many things that had previously been accepted, including the conviction of a divinely inspired corpus of sacred writings; for example in 1784 the German philosopher Leasing published a book significantly entitled *A New Hypothesis Concerning the Evangelists Considered as Purely Human Writers of History*,[14] and in harmony with Ibn Hazm's point of view concerning the gospels. In this context, one point should be kept in mind: modern biblical and historical study does not consider the evangelists as historians or biographers in the modern sense, on the basis that the writers of the gospels did not present a comprehensive account or record of Jesus' life and ministry.

Dibelius says of the gospels: "They are not to be compared with biographies, either modern or ancient",[15] and Martin Kahler in his book The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ states: "We do not possess any sources for a 'life of Jesus' which a historian can accept as reliable and adequate. I repeat: we have no

sources for a biography of Jesus of Nazareth which measure up to the standards of contemporary historical science."[16]

The gospels are not historical books, but were written rather to awaken faith. Paul Althaus sums it up: "The gospels are not in the least like historical sources, as the historian understands the term; the evangelists are "preachers".[17]

S. J. Xavier Leon-Dufour remarks that nearly everything concerning the life of Jesus comes from the four gospels, but these four books, far from providing a straightforward biography of him "seem, if read carefully to be full of contradictions".[18] The evangelists paid no regard to Jesus' childhood and early life to such an extent that historians cannot now agree on the exact date of Jesus' birth or rather, the contradiction between Matthew 2, which necessitates that Jesus be born in 4 B.C. or earlier, and Luke 2:3, requiring a date of 6 C.E. exactly, leads to an insoluble discrepancy of 9 years. Most Christian writers follow Matthew, because Luke 2:2 would make Jesus too young at the beginning of his ministry implied as 28 C.E. by Luke 3:1.

Turning from the question of the authenticity of the gospels as historical source material to Ibn Hazm's point that they were written at different times by different men, it should be noted that in this matter Ibn Hazm is more correct than the later renowned theologian, ash-Shahrastani (d. 548 A. H.= 1153 A.C.), whose text seems to imply some kind of collaborative or collective effort on the part of the four writers: "Matthew, Luke, Mark and John came together, and each of them wrote a collection which he called the Gospel."[19]

Ash-Shahrastani makes a further error in describing the Gospel writers as *Hawariyyin*, Apostles.[20] This is, of course, not the case since as Chrysostom pointed out, "Two write only from among the

Apostles, and two from among their followers, (for one that was a disciple of Paul, and another of Peter, together with Matthew and John, wrote the gospels)",[21] and this view is also held by Ibn Hazm.[22] Mark and Luke were not among the twelve Apostles "called" by Jesus.

The anomalies between ash-Shahrastani's account and that of Ibn Hazm may be explained by their use of different source texts, the former using an Arabic version arranging the gospels in the following order: Matthew, Luke, Mark and John.[23]

Further evidence of Ibn Hazm's precision compared to other Muslim writers can be derived from an examination of some errors made by the great historian al-Mas`udi (d. 346 A. H. = 957 A.C.) who, like ash-Shahrastani, regarded the Gospel writers as Apostles, (*Hawariyyin*) and named them as Mark, John, Peter, Paul and Luke.[24] This could partially be explained by the possible existence of an apocryphal Gospel ascribed to Peter[25] in al-Mas`udi's time, and the possibility that he was including Paul because of the tradition that Mark's Gospel includes Paul's teaching.

Ibn Hazm's arrangement of the New Testament Books

Ibn Hazm does not actually use the term "the New Testament" in his writings on Christianity, although it is found in earlier Muslim writings such as those by `Ali ibn Rabban at-Tabari,[26] (born between 158 and 169 A.H.=774 and 785 A.C.) and Ibn an-Nadim (377 A. H. = 987 A. C.) who says in *Al-Fihrist*, "I asked Yunus the priest who was learned about the books of the Jews and Christians, and he mentioned to me two collections: *As-Sura Al-`Atiqa Wa As-Sura Al-Haditha*, meaning the Old and New Testaments.[27]

Ibn Hazm's arrangement of the books of the New Testament is as follows:

1. Matthew

2. Mark

3. Luke

4. John

5. Acts

6. Revelations

7, 8 & 9. Three epistles by John, son of Zebedee

10 & 11. Two epistles by Peter

12. Epistle by James or Jacob, son of Joseph, the carpenter

13 Epistle by Jude, the brother of Jacob

14. The fifteen Epistles by Paul, the disciple of Peter.

The most interesting feature of this list is its apparent denigration of the letters of Paul by placing them last.

Ibn Hazm describes the text he is using as follows: Matthew, 28 leaves in a medium-sized script; Mark, 24 leaves; Luke, as Matthew; John, 24 leaves in a medium-sized script; Acts, 50 leaves in a cramped hand; Revelations; and the seven Catholic Epistles, which he describes as canonical, each written either on one or two leaves and in a poor style. The Epistles of Paul contained about 40 leaves "full of blasphemy"(28) as Ibn Hazm remarks.

By comparing the above list with the current New Testament version, it will be seen that Ibn Hazm's arrangement accords with the current order as far as Acts, and differs from it in the arrangement of

the rest and in the quantity of Paul's letters as follows: he places Revelations before the Catholic Epistles, rather than in the current sequence: 14 Pauline letters, 7 Catholic Epistles, Revelations. Like the current version, we find the seven Catholic Epistles together, but in a somewhat different order. There are two possible ways of explaining the variation between Ibn Hazm's order and the order adopted in the current version of the Bible.

Firstly, he may have followed one of the New Testament lists current in his own time, such as this list: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, the seven Catholic Epistles, (Jacob, Peter, John, Jude), fourteen Epistles of Paul, Revelations.(29) Ibn Hazm's list corresponds to this with the slight difference of Jacob in place of John, and John in place of Jacob, and fifteen, rather than fourteen Pauline Epistles,(30) and the positioning of Revelations immediately after Acts.

On the subject of the number of Pauline Epistles, Ibn Hazm's list includes the Epistle to the Hebrews, which has traditionally been ascribed to Paul although it does not bear its author's name. The fifteenth Epistle in Ibn Hazm's list could be the third letter to the Corinthians, to which Paul made reference and which exists in an apocryphal form.(31) Furthermore it is obvious, as B.K. Rattey has pointed out, that the early Church was in possession of numerous documents including Epistles, that those Epistles now deemed canonical were not always judged so, just as some Epistles, for example that of Barnabas, enjoyed canonical status for a time.(32) Ibn Hazm does not refer to any Christian texts that fall outside the canon except 3 Corinthians. Ibn Hazm was in Catholic Spain, so he naturally had the Athanasian NT canon. Widely used in Western Christendom. Although al-Biruni did so, as mentioned elsewhere.(33) He stresses, however, that the gospels were written by four different men who

received their material from only five persons. Implicit in this emphasis is a query as to why only four of Jesus' followers held the responsibility of transmitting the account of his life. This point is also raised by Chrysostom, "And why can it have been that when there were so many disciples, two write only from among the followers?"[34]

Ibn Hazm's use of the word "canonical" to describe the seven Catholic Epistles only is interesting since all the New Testament books had been declared canonical by the end of the fourth century C. E. The arrangement of Ibn Hazm's text cannot be explained in terms of the chronology of admission to the canon, since the Epistles of Paul were admitted after the four gospels, but before the seven Catholic Epistles and Revelations.[35] His use of the word canonical to describe the seven Catholic Epistles could perhaps be explained as follows. Ibn Hazm does not use the term Catholic anywhere in his writings, not even when speaking of Recared the Visigoth King (d. 601 A. C.),[36] who established Catholicism in Spain in place of Arianism. It seems possible that he either used "Canonical" to mean "Catholic"[37] or a scribal error produced "Canonical" for his use of "Catholic". The word "Catholic" was used earlier by al-Mahdi, who, in his debate with Timothy called the latter "Catholicos", which corresponds to the Greek work "Katholikos".[38] Elsewhere Ibn Hazm makes it clear that he is aware of the entire canon of the scriptures, and does in fact distinguish between the canonical books and other religious writings on which Christianity draws, so that his labeling of only seven Epistles as canonical is no indication that he was unaware of what the term denotes.[39]

It is, of course, possible that the arrangement of the New Testament employed by Ibn Hazm is his own, rather than that of a contemporary list, or only partly based on a contemporary list. Scribal

error cannot be discounted, but it should be noted that Ibn Hazm's arrangement has the logic of positioning the books according to the supposed closeness of their authors to Jesus.

The text used by Ibn Hazm

Muslim writers often differ from one another when quoting from the gospels, there was no standard text in use. Carra de Vaux in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* actually identified six different groups of Arabic manuscripts, giving some idea of the number of variant texts.[40] Ibn Hazm's text differed from the general-used current version in two ways.

Firstly, there are differences in vocabulary; e.g., "The Lamb of God," which is described as *Hamal* in the Arabic version, is rendered *Kharuf* by Ibn Hazm. Many other examples of this kind will be discussed later. Secondly, Ibn Hazm does not divide his quotations into verses, neither do the chapter divisions he uses correspond to the current scripture.

Available data does not offer any help in identifying which text was used by the author of *Al-Faisal*. Specialist studies have failed to ascertain the origins of the biblical citations in *Al-Faisal*.[41]

Extra-Canonical texts

Ibn Hazm, having enumerated the books of the New Testament, noted that in addition to those books accepted as sacred by Christians, there were other books written by the patriarchs and bishops: e.g., the six ecumenical councils and all the productions of the minor or local councils,[42] which were important, if not sacred, and which were described individually and in detail by Ibn Khaldun[43] and al-Yaqubi, along with the rules for conducting ritual which were put forward by

King Recared (d. 601 A.H.) (written wrongly as Zachariah by Ibn Hazm elsewhere).[44] Finally, it should be noted that the author of *Al-Faisal* was acquainted with Christian martyrology.

Provenance and language

The subject of provenance will be linked with the subject of language in the following section. Ibn Hazm's concern with the texts of the gospels and their history is determined by his larger argument concerning their validity as sacred books. He states that Matthew compiled his Gospel in Hebrew in Judaea. This is supported by the tradition, and considerable evidence is available to confirm Ibn Hazm's viewpoint. The earliest reference to Matthew being in Hebrew or Aramaic is in the fragments of Papias, says: "Matthew composed the logia in the Hebrew tongue and everyone interpreted them as he was able". Irenaeus in his book *Against Heresies* (3.1.1) writes: "Matthew also published a book of the Gospel among the Hebrews, in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome and founding the Church".[45]

Eusebius in his history (6.25.4) quotes Origen as saying that he had learned that "The first Gospel was written by Matthew, who was once a tax collector, but who afterwards was an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and it was prepared for converts from Judaism, and published in the Hebrew language."

Augustine in his work on the agreement of the evangelists (1.2.4.) writes: "Of these four it is certain that only Matthew is regarded as having written in the Hebrew language, while the others wrote in Greek" and he says that Mark "followed closely in his footsteps, as his imitator and epitomizer". The Monarchain prologues say in the Argument to Matthew's Gospel: "Just as Matthew from Judaea is

placed first in order, so he also wrote his Gospel first in Judaea." Barclay commented on such quotations and others in the following words: "As we have said, and as we have now seen, the tradition of the early Church is clear, consistent and unanimous. It was believed that Matthew wrote the first Gospel, that he wrote it first of all the gospels and that it was originally written in Hebrew."[46]

Papias' statement about the language of Matthew's Gospel should be noted: "Matthew compiled the sayings as oracles in the Aramaic language or a Hebrew dialect and everyone translated or interpreted them as well as he could."[47]

Papias' text indicates that there were several translations of Matthew's Gospel; which text was chosen by the Church is not known. However, some modern scholars have suggested that the writing Papias ascribed to St. Matthew was not in fact the Gospel which now bears his name, but simply a collection of utterances or testimonies or proof texts from the old testament, but there is hardly any evidence that there was ever such a collection in a book form. Nevertheless all the ancient Christian authors such as Eusebius had read Papias' commentary and assumed that he was speaking of a Gospel.[48] Papias' statement, then, must refer to a Gospel, particularly as the same statement is made by all the great early Christian writers. Origen, for example, tells us that Matthew's Gospel was written for believers who had come from Judaism and the same view is held by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius.[49] The above information suggest an Aramaic origin for Matthew's Gospel which has been generally abandoned on account of the use of Mark and the LXX version of the O. T.

According to the principle of the priority of Mark established 200 years ago in biblical criticism, the present Matthew is a Greek, not an

Aramaic or Hebrew Gospel, and was composed in Greek, and could not have been composed except in Greek, that is because it has evidently copied 600 verses from the more primitive Gospel of Mark, which is purely Greek.

Ibn Hazm's understanding of the original language of Matthew's Gospel as Hebrew is thus in agreement with ancient tradition. The question of translation, raised by Papias, is also considered by Ibn Hazm, who is more specific, stating that the Apostle John translated the Gospel into Greek.(50) As a contrast Jerome (c. 342-420) remarked that Matthew "first wrote a Gospel of Christ in Judaea and in Hebrew letters and words (literis verbisque) for the benefit of those of the circumcision who believed. Who afterwards translated it into Greek is not quite certain."(51) Ibn Hazm, however, does not give the date at which this took place. The view that John was the translator is supported by Ibn al-Batriq, who dates the original to the reign of the Emperor Claudius and states that it was translated into Greek by John.(52) The modern scholar, Alfred Plummer, noted that certain superscriptions on texts make the point that John, James or Bartholomew could have been responsible for the translation.(53) John could certainly have been responsible for one of the translations referred to by Papias since Matthew preceded him in collecting Jesus' sayings.

The twenty-eight leaves of Ibn Hazm's text, mentioned above, correspond approximately to the current Arabic version of Matthew's Gospel, as do the descriptions of the other books used by Ibn Hazm.

Matthew

Ibn Hazm states that Matthew was a tax collector and one of Jesus' disciples. The author of *Al-Faisal* describes his martyrdom as having been carried out by decapitation,(54) but gives no information as to

time and place. There is, in fact, no reliable evidence as to the manner or place of death from other sources. Following the traditional view Ibn Hazm states that the Gospel of Matthew comes before the other gospels (or the other New Testament writings) in importance and chronology. He goes on to say that it was written in Hebrew, in Judaea in Syria nine years after the Ascension of Jesus. John, the writer of the fourth Gospel had translated it from Hebrew into Greek. The author of *Al-Faisal* is silent on the subject of when and where this took place.(55) Bearing in mind the general tenor of Ibn Hazm's scholarship, the time of nine years after the Ascension will not have been a random choice. It is, however, beyond the scope of this book to conduct a thorough investigation and analysis of the evidence of the dating of Matthew's Gospel, although it instructive to note that of the early Christian writers Irenaeus suggests a date of before 68 A.C. for the authorship,(56) and according to a tradition in Eusebius (HEiii. 246) he wrote it before his departure from Palestine into foreign parts, that is to say, much earlier.(57)

There is no indication that the Apostle Matthew wrote the existing Gospel; indeed, it is almost impossible, because the present Gospel was authored in Greek and copied 600 verses from Mark. There is no mention of Matthew's authorship in the Gospel, the writer of the Gospel which bears Matthew's name appears only in the title, which was probably affixed early in the second century and not in the text itself. The verses mentioning Matthew, the tax collector suggests that he could not have written it. The legendary motifs associated with the material coupled with the massive copying from Mark make it impossible that it could be an eyewitness account.

Certainly most current academic Bible Scholarship regards the gospels as much later than the period of the Apostles. All are

considered anonymous, whatever the church tradition may say. Generally we would date Mark C. 75 C.E., Matthew C. 85, Luke and John not earlier than C. 110 C. E.

Mark

Ibn Hazm states: "Mark wrote his Gospel twenty-two years after the Ascension of Jesus in Greek at Antioch, and they said that Peter himself compiled it and handed it over to his student St. Mark, having omitted his name from it; and it contains twenty-four leaves written in a medium-sized script."[(58)]

Ibn Hazm puts Mark's Gospel immediately after Matthew, which follows the logic of chronology since, according to his comments, it was written thirteen years after Matthew. Modern scholarship has disputed the priority of Matthew, but there is still a group of scholars who continue to defend the traditional chronology.[(59)] Ibn Hazm does not mention Mark as being one of Jesus' disciples, regarding him only as a pupil of Peter the Apostle. This view draws on the tradition which confirmed that Mark never encountered Jesus, a tradition supported by St. Papias, writing shortly after 100 A.C. on the authority of John the Presbyter, and followed by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Origen. Papias' words are as follows: "Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, not, indeed, in order, of the things said or done by the Lord. For he had not heard the Lord, nor had he followed Him, but later on, as I said, followed Peter, who used to give teaching as necessity demanded but not making, as it were, an arrangement of the Lord's Oracles, so that Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down single points as he remembered them. For to one thing he gave attention, to leave out nothing of what he had heard and to make no false statements in them."[(60)]

It is highly important to note that, it is now believed that Papias's real date is about 130 A. C., not "shortly after 100 A. C." The Christians always try to make their writers earlier to be more convincing.

Papias' statement is obviously, directly or indirectly, Ibn Hazm's source, although Papias does not mention that Peter wrote the Gospel, or that Mark's name was added to it as its author, but merely associates the two saints with one another, making it clear that Mark himself presented the Gospel from material that he collected from the sayings of his mentor, the chief Apostle, Peter. Ibn al-Batriq (263-328 A. H.= 876-940 A.C.) provided contradictory arguments as to the authorship of Mark's Gospel, saying both that Peter wrote down a Gospel during Nero's reign (54-68 A.C.) which he then handed on to Mark, and also that Peter dictated the Gospel to Mark at Rome, and Mark substituted his own name for that of Peter.(61) This is obviously an illogical argument, as pointed out by Abu Zahra.(62)

Ibn Hazm's view is not only to ascribe the Gospel to Mark, but also to make mention of the theory that Peter was in fact the author giving the Gospel to Mark. This latter view is advanced by him purely as the assumption of other people, and not as a statement capable of absolute proof.(63) Al-Mas`udi (d. 346 A. H. = 957 A.C.) and Ibn Khaldun (d. 808 A. H. = 1406 A.C.), however, definitely state that the Gospel was written in Greek by St. Peter, handed over to Mark and ascribed to him, and that Mark went to Alexandria and preached the Gospel.(64)

However, Ibn Hazm considers the provenance of manuscript of Mark's Gospel to be Antioch,(65) an original view never suggested before, made on grounds which can only be inferred. Peter had been in Antioch and, according to tradition, became its first Bishop, information which might have formed the basis of Ibn Hazm's point.(66) The author

of *Al-Faisal* dates the writing of Mark's Gospel to 22 years after Jesus' Ascension,[67] differing from `Abdullah at-Tarjuman who states that it was written 27 years after the Ascension;[68] he does not, however, explain why he fixed it on this as the earliest possible date at which the Gospel was written.

Luke

Ibn Hazm states that Luke was an Antiochene Syrian doctor, and a student and a fellow of St. Paul, but that he was not an Apostle of Jesus.[69] His statement is absolutely correct and supported both by internal and external evidence. Luke is actually called "the beloved physician" by Paul (Col 4:14), and the vocabulary of the third Gospel and of Acts also seems to justify[70] this profession. Some modern scholars have, in fact, argued that evidence of medical knowledge in Luke's Gospel and Acts supports this view.[71] This is all a ridiculously flimsy assertion that has been thoroughly refuted by Christian Bible scholarship. There is no reason to suppose Luke wrote Luke - Acts. Probably these books are very late, as they are full of harmonizations and elaborations that probably reflect an early second century date. The strongest argument for Luke's authorship is only that he was a minor character, but that is a poor argument proving nothing.

The earliest authority for Luke's being a doctor is recorded in the Muratorian Canon, which, as Barclay pointed out: "represents the view of the Church in Rome about 170 A.C."

Eusebius made the following statement: "Luke, being by birth one of the people of Antioch, and by profession a physician, having been with Paul a good deal, and having associated himself intimately with the rest of the Apostles, has left us examples of the art of curing souls that he obtained from them in two divinely inspired books."[72] This

appeared in the prologue of the Gospel according to Luke, which has survived in Greek in a single manuscript.[73]

Ibn Hazm described Luke's Gospel in the manuscript he used as being written in Greek, and of the same number of leaves as Matthew, i.e., 28. The author of *Al-Faisal* mentions Achaea as the provenance of Luke's Gospel,[74] a view supported by the prologue to the Greek manuscript, although it is not clear whether or not this was the text to which Ibn Hazm himself had access. Other scholars and commentators have reiterated Achaea as the place of composition; Jerome, in his commentary on Matthew and the document known as the Monarchian Prologue to Luke mention Achaea[75] as does Ricoldo of Montecroce, (1243-1320 A.C.), who according to Sweetman held that Luke wrote in Greek in Achaea.[76] Barclay regards such statements, external to the prologue itself, as at best "no more than a development of the belief that Luke wrote primarily for the Greeks."[77] Nevertheless, Ibn Hazm's statement regarding provenance should be seen as proof of his comprehensive knowledge of the early traditions of the Church, and although he had access to the Greek prologue he may have based his statement on the Christian belief that Luke was buried in Achaea.

He does not mention a specific date of composition; he merely says that Luke was written some time after Mark, i.e., some time later than twenty-two years after the Ascension,[78] again differing from at-Tarjuman who says that it was written thirty by years after the Ascension.[79]

Ibn Hazm has no hesitation in considering that Acts was also written by Luke, despite the fact that neither of these works bears their author's name; in this respect he follows Christian tradition and differs from Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Amiri (d. 381 A. H.=991 A. C.), who considered Peter to be the author of Acts.[80] Al-Amiri may, however,

have been referring to one of the earliest and best-known apocryphal books, the Acts of St. Peter, mistakenly inserting it in the canon. Ibn Hazm provides no information as to the dating or provenance of Acts.

Finally, it should be noted that Ibn Hazm's criticism of Luke's Gospel as not being divinely inspired draws on the prologue, interpreting it as evidence that the author was merely a man who wrote the story of Jesus.[81]

John

Ibn Hazm states that the writer of the fourth Gospel is one and the same as the writer of Revelations, two Epistles, and the translation of St. Matthew. The personal details he gives of John the man are brief: he states that he was the son of Zebedee, written as Sizay, or according to some manuscripts, Sibithi.[82] He was an Apostle of Jesus, wrote his Gospel in Asia, and was martyred by poison.[83]

Ibn Hazm describes his text as contained on twenty-four leaves and written in a medium-sized hand. He reserves his harshest criticism for this Gospel, considering it to be the most distorted and full of blasphemy and internal contradiction. He views the Gospel as mere biography, written more than sixty years after the Ascension. There is, in fact, a large body of criticism, from different schools of thought, directed towards the text of John's Gospel, but it is not the task of this book to attempt an analysis of such criticism.

Ibn Hazm describes John's Gospel as written in Greek at Ashinia, undoubtedly a scribal error for Asia or Ephesus.[84] Some Christian scholars support the Apostle John as the author; C.K. Barrette, for example, refers to Eusebius who quotes Irenaeus as saying, "And all the elders that associated with John the disciple of the Lord in Asia bear witness that John delivered it (the Gospel) to them. For he

remained among them until the time of Trajan." Irenaeus confirms the above statement by remarking, "But the Church in Ephesus also, which was founded by Paul, and where John remained until the time of Trajan, is a faithful witness of the apostolic tradition."[85]

Bar-Hebraeus remarks that John "wrote a Gospel in Greek at the request of the sons of Asia. And Eusebius says that Peter and Paul came to him to Ephesus and persuaded him to write. And there are in it eight miracles and five parables and fifteen testimonies."[86]

On the subject of dating Ibn Hazm gives sixty years after the Ascension as the earliest possible date of composition, doubtless allowing for John's travels to Asia, and taking into account the differences between the fourth Gospel and the other three in the light of the development of Christianity.

The Gospel of Thomas is one of the fifty-two texts discovered at Nag-Hammadi.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Ibn Hazm in the main presents a surprisingly accurate account of the New Testament books, showing his ability for the task to which he addresses himself and a scholarly concern to describe his source material. As a historian he is at pains to account for, with exactness, the texts he is investigating; he is also keen to furnish evidence of the lack of any sound *Isnad* (unbroken chains of authorities) in the Christian scriptures. This explains his emphasis on the authorship, language, date of composition and provenance of the four gospels. Even if they were written by four different men, in different places, and at different times - which all postdate the Ascension of Jesus - and were preserved in two languages, they show little evidence of Isnad, i.e., transmitting the text by a chain of authorities going back

to Jesus without a break, as in the case of the Islamic traditions.[87] This last point represents the general Muslim view of Christian gospels.

It should be noted that the available data show that all the present gospels were written in Greek originally and all are anonymous, the names of their original authors being unknown and their present names having been added latter. In all probability they were written and rewritten and revised several times before reaching their present form. Several apocryphal gospels also may contain original, early, or authentic material, especially the Coptic Gospel of Thomas, whose original language was also Greek, and to some extent the Gospel of Peter and the lost Gospel of Hebrews.

About this Gospel there are two striking points:

First, its complete silence on Jesus' death and resurrection - the core of Paul's missionary activities as Helmut Koester points out, "Thomas is not alone in this silence. The Synoptic Sayings Source (Q), used by Matthew and Luke, also does not consider Jesus' death a part of the Christian message. And it likewise is not interested in stories and reports about the resurrection and subsequent appearances of the risen Lord. The Gospel of Thomas and Q challenge the assumption that the early church was unanimous in making Jesus' death and resurrection the fulcrum of Christian faith." Koester goes on to say "Both documents presuppose that Jesus' significance lay in his words, and his words alone."

The second striking point about this Gospel is its almost total absence of Christological titles, such as "Christ/Messiah," "Lord," and "Son of man".[88]

Within the same context, it is highly important to note that in recent studies, Dieter Luhrmann and, John S. Kloppenborg, after him

argue that Q was composed in two successive stages and that the understanding of Jesus as the future Son of man was not yet present in the earlier stage of its composition.

The sayings which speak about the coming of the Son of man for the final judgment and the addition of the title Son of man to older sayings belongs to the second stage of this document which originally presented Jesus as a teacher of wisdom and as a prophet who announced in his words the presence of the kingdom.(89)

Among Nag-Hammadi texts is the Gospel of Philip which attributes to Jesus' acts and sayings quite different from those mentioned in the New Testament, to illustrate this: ... the companion of the [Savior(s)] Mary Magdalene. [But Christ loved] her more than [all] the disciples, and used to kiss her [often] on her [mouth]. The rest of [the disciples were offended]... They said to him, 'Why do you love her more than all of us?' The Savior answered and said to them, 'Why do I not love you as (I love) her?' (90)

This collection of writings moreover contains other sayings criticizing common Christian beliefs, such as the version birth and the bodily resurrection, as naive misunderstandings. Besides the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Philip, the Nag-Hammadi collections include the Gospel of Truth and the Gospel to the Egyptians which identifies itself as the [Spirit], but it is beyond the scope of this book to go into the deep water of the scholarly investigation of Nag-Mammadi collections.

What we want to underline here is that, because of the Christian failure to protect Jesus' true Gospel, *Injil* there appeared many gospels claiming to be Jesus'; to minimize the differences and discrepancies between these gospels the church canonized four gospels only and

persecuted the others for nothing but to suit and support a man set of doctrines and force them on people.[91]

To conclude with, it is useful to quote Adam Clarke's comment on Galatine 1:5, 6: "It is established that many minor gospels had become common in the early centuries of Christianity. The abundance of such false and incorrect accounts led Luke to write his Gospel. We read about more than seventy such gospels. Some parts of these gospels are still in existence and available. Many such gospels were collected and published in three volumes by Fabricius. Some describe the obligatory nature of the laws of Moses, the validity of circumcision and imperativeness of the Gospel."[92]

This statement implies that many spurious gospels were current before the writing of the Gospel of Luke and Paul's letter to Galatians. It also indicates that Paul used a properly Gospel.

Finally, Lardner says about the anonymity of the gospels, "At the time when Anastasius reigned in Constantinople he ruled that the Holy gospels were not correct since their authors were not known so they were corrected a second time."[93]

CHAPTER FIVE

The Transmission of the Christian Sacred Texts and the Question of Corruption

In this chapter we will discuss the Gospel of Jesus, in which Muslims believe, and its relation to the four Christian gospels, and the provenance of the Christian sacred texts. The Muslims' claim that the Christian texts have been corrupted will be examined in the light of both Islamic and Christian traditions, and the texts themselves will be subjected to critical analysis. It needs no stressing that to say Muslims believe in the "Gospel". It is referred to many times in the Qur'an. Prophet Muhammad himself mentioned it several times. The Qur'an mentions the Gospel with the same reverence as other Holy texts. It is regarded as a source of light and guidance. The Qur'an also speaks of the "Gospel" in connection with Jesus and the message he brought from God, and how his followers were instructed to act in accordance with it. The Gospel as understood by the Muslims is a heavenly Book which God revealed to Jesus, commanding him to deliver its message to the people at a certain time in a certain place. To acknowledge the existence of this heavenly Gospel means, in other words, that Jesus was a prophet. The Qur'an mentions many other prophets by name, and states that God has sent others as well whose names were not known to His Prophet Muhammad. But God does not mention books

revealed by Him to these unnamed prophets. Only five revealed books are mentioned in the Qur'an. The Gospel is one of them. What Christians now hold in their hands is not the Gospel to which the Qur'an refers, but their gospels do contain parts of that text, which according to the Qur'an is corrupted as shall be seen latter in this chapter, and according to Christians did not exist as such. The meaning of the word Gospel will be examined in this chapter, in order to prove that the word can be applied to the lost "Gospel" as a written text. It is important to understand that "Gospel" in this context means this work and not the usual four Christian gospels.

The English word Gospel originally meant "good news", just as the Qur'an originally meant "recitation", but in both cases the words refer to an actual written text.

In this chapter reference will be made to the possible location of the Gospel of Jesus in which Muslims believe. As a sideline to our discussion, I may perhaps refer here to Jesus' statement that he came not to destroy the Torah but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). This implies that he carried something which would supplement the Jewish text. This view will be supported by the many quotations from the Bible in this chapter. Now we turn our attention to the transmission of the Bible and the question of the corruption that the four gospels have undergone.

In the beginning it should be remembered that the Qur'an depicted Jesus as a great prophet and messenger of God, who was one of the long line of prophets who had been sent to the people of the world. He was a messenger whose guidance and teachings were a reaffirmation and extension of the guidance which had been brought by the prophets who had preceded him and been a preparation for the guidance which the Prophet coming after him would bring. As an illustration, the following verses from the Qur'an may be quoted: ﴿*And We gave to*

Moses the Book, and after him sent succeeding messengers; and We gave Jesus, son of Mary the clear signs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit. ﴾[1]

The Qur'an recognizes several biblical figures as prophets, among whom Jesus stands as an equal: ﴿*Say, we believe in God, and that which has been sent down to us, and was sent down before to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and the prophets of their Lord; we make no division between any of them, and to Him we surrender.* ﴾[2]

In the view of the above-mentioned examples, the Revelation of God had continuously come to His prophets, who were all connected to the same Divine source, and Jesus was not distinguished from the rest of the prophets all of whom successively taught the truth to the people. There are several Muslim traditions, *Hadith*s, which corroborate the Qur'anic view of Jesus as prophet.[3]

The Christian scriptures consisted of the Jewish scriptures until the second-century recognition of the New Testament as inspired. The Jewish scriptures were, however, felt to be a Christian book which spoke of Jesus as a savior on every page.[4] This Christian view of the Jewish scriptures was later criticized by Ibn Hazm. The Jewish sacred books are mentioned in the Qur'an generally under the title of the Torah; this constituted the five books of Moses, the so-called Pentateuch or the law, which is the origin and cornerstone of the Hebrew Bible.[5] However, Ibn Taymiyah states that the Jews use the title Torah to refer to the whole of their Bible.[6] This is an important possibility. It is true that Torah-law is used loosely by the Jews to refer to the whole Bible, and even to the Talmud, which they call the Oral Torah. In the Qur'an it is clear that Torah refers to the five books of Moses, since the Book of David is mentioned additionally to the

Torah, as Zabur, the Psalter. Nevertheless the Qur'an does not exactly limit the Jewish Torah and in particular does not deny the possibility, that the Talmud or Oral Torah could be included, as it is attributed to Moses especially in light of Q 5:32, which seem to have a talmudic but no biblical parallel. On the other hand, we can say that all Qura'nic sentences referring to the Torah refer to parts of an original Torah which does not now exactly exist.

Ibn Hazm together with several Muslim theologians argued convincingly, if bitterly, against the authorship and sanctity of the Jewish scriptures.(7)

The *Injil*, the Gospel

In the Qur'an, the Revelation given especially to Jesus and associated with him is known as *al-Injil*, the Gospel. Qur'anic commentators and philologists are not in agreement about the etymology of the word *Injil*. `Abdullah b. Muslim b. Qutayba understood *Injil* as deriving from the itc; form 'to appear', 'to draw out', thus connecting the word Injil itself with the meaning of the word *Tahrif* which suggests the disappearance of truth. *Tahrif* thus causes many features of the truth to vanish while *Injil* brings it into view. This critic suggests that, as the People of the Book altered the truth, and as Muslims were ignorant of what they were doing, God declared the truth in the Gospel, *Injil*, some of them held that it is Arabic in origin, coming either from the word *Najl*, i.e., 'source' or 'origin', or from *Najaltu*; the verb 'to draw out.'(8) Others maintain that it is a non-Arabic word which was transcribed into Arabic.(9)

There are two views about the arrival of the word *Injil* into Arabic. Firstly, that it come from Syria;(10) secondly from the Ethiopian wangle. Geoffrey Parrinder pointed out that the word wangle has a

long vowel like *Injil* and this suggested that the word was brought over by Abyssinian Christians,[11] and it was probably in widespread use in Arabia before Muhammad's time.[12] The word *Injil* occurs twelve times in the Qur'an: 3:3, 48, 65; 5:46, 47, 66, 68, 110; 7:157; 9:111; 48:29; 57:27. These verses show that the Qur'an states that Jesus was given the *Injil*, a single Gospel, together with all the truths preserved in the revealed Books, the Torah and the Wisdom.

Ibn Ishaq in his book *Sirat An-Nabi* remarks that the Gospel contains what Jesus brought in confirmation of Moses, and of the Torah, which Moses brought from God.[13]

Ibn Ishaq generally reflects the Islamic point of view of the single Gospel bestowed upon Jesus. Ibn Kathir states that the *Injil* was sent down to Jesus, son of Mary, in the nineteenth night of Ramadan on the mountain of Sira.[14] It should be mentioned that some of the apocryphal epistles held that Jesus brought a book from heaven which he transmitted or revealed to his disciples.[15] Moreover the Apocalypse of St. Peter states: "And I rejoiced and believed and understood that which is written in the book of my Lord Jesus Christ".[16] And the author of the Gospel of St. Barnabas says that the *Injil* was revealed to Jesus on the Mount of Olives.[17] However, the orthodox Muslim view ascribes the Gospel, the Torah and the Qur'an to the same Divine source, regarding them as declaring the truth and giving guidance to mankind. In this context one point should be kept in mind: that, as the illustrious Qur'anic commentator az-Zamakhshari (d. 538 A. H.) states, all the sacred documents are called the *Furqan*, i.e. proof or evidence, as well as the Qur'an. The Qur'an claims to be a confirmation, protector and touchstone of the truth contained in the Torah and the Gospel.[18]

The relationship between the Qur'an and the Christian scriptures as understood by Christians and Muslims can be brought into focus by reference to a single Qur'anic verse and a comparison of the ways in which it has been understood by both sides. From the Christian viewpoint, which is, in fact, an adoption of one method of interpreting the verse; the verse reads as follows: ﴿*So, if thou art in doubt regarding what We have sent down to thee, ask those who recite the Book before thee. The truth has come to thee from thy Lord; so be not of the doubters.*﴾[19]

Ricoldo comments that this means: "Those who had read the Book before the Saracens were the Jews and the Christians, who had in their hands the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, and the Gospel, as Muhammad explains. And so he tells the Saracens (the Muslims) to inquire from Christians and Jews about anything ambiguous... and so in the time of Muhammad the books of the Christians and Jews were not corrupted, it is also not possible to say that they were corrupted afterwards".[20]

The question of corruption will be dealt with later, but this quotation clearly illustrates the way in which Christians have taken the verse as an absolute Qur'anic testimony of the soundness of the scriptures in their hands. The modern scholar, Parrinder, follows Ricoldo in interpreting the verse as a command to confer with the people who had received the scriptures earlier.[21]

Ibn Hazm's contemporary, the Jewish scholar Ibn al-Nighrila understood the verse to signify that Muhammad doubted God, or the truthfulness of the Revelation given to him. The Muslim point of view can be demonstrated by reference to Ibn Hazm, Ibn Taymiyah and some other Muslim scholars. Ibn Hazm provides an interpretation of the verse in question and then answers his critic polemically. It is the

author of *Al-Faisal* which is of prime interest here: it involves Ibn Hazm in an interpretation which at first sight seems to move outside the literalist theory to which he was committed, but in fact it does not go beyond his own definition of the Zahiriyya position. The rejection of exegesis, *Ta'wil*, is not an outright rejection and permits its use when necessary in considering certain Qur'anic passages and when it can be supported by scriptural evidence.

Ibn Hazm insists that the interpretation exemplified by Ricoldo above originates with the People of the books, i.e. Christians and Jews, and with some others. Those who claim to be Muslims could never share such a view. It is impossible that a Muslim should think that Muhammad doubted the Revelation from God. Ibn Hazm refers to an essay which he himself wrote on this subject;(22) this unfortunately does not appear among his writings, and was clearly not included as a section of *Al-Faisal*. Ibn Hazm, however, summarizes the argument of the essay in his comment on this verse. The confusion can be solved as follows: the word "In" translated into English as "If", is synonymous with the conjunction "Ma" which signifies refusal and denial. The verse thus reads not "if you are in doubt", but "you are not in doubt".(23) The author of *Al-Faisal* continues by saying that God commanded Muhammad to confer with the People of the books to confirm their knowledge of Muhammad as a Prophet sent from God, as corroborated in the Torah and the Gospel.(24) Ibn Hazm, as shown above, uses linguistic analysis in order to resolve the problem of a difficult verse, and in doing so follows a method of resolving its particular difficulties which was not unique to him. At-Tabari and others had, in fact, reviewed a range of solutions to this verse of which Ibn Hazm's constituted only one of many possibilities. Any judgment of his argument needs to be placed against the alternative solutions described by at-Tabari.

Ibn Jarir at-Tabari (d. 311 A. H. - 923 A. D.) comments on the verse: "God says to His Prophet Muhammad that if you are in doubt about the truthfulness of what We told you in Revelations - that the children of Israel had not differed concerning your prophethood before you were sent by God as an Apostle to His people, for they found you prophesied in their scripture, and they knew you from the description of you given in the Torah and *Injil* - you must confer with those who read the sacred book before you, that is, the people of the Torah and the people of the Gospel, such as `Abdullah Ibn Salam and those who, like him, were honest and had faith in you: do not ask those who are dishonest or are unbelievers."(25)

At-Tabari reported Ibn `Abbas as saying that the book referred to in the verse was the Torah and the Gospel; the people with whom Muhammad was commanded to confer were those who lived in Muhammad's time and believed in him. The Prophet was to turn to them if questions as to the foretelling of his own prophethood in those books arose. The only object of possible doubt was then Muhammad himself, and the people with whom he was to confer were restricted to those who believed in his mission. Furthermore, Muhammad had been prophesied in the scriptures - Jewish and Christian - but these prophecies had been denied by the majority of Jews and Christians except for those who had come to accept that such prophecies were truthful and had become Muslim.

At-Tabari continues by saying: If anybody asks, 'was the Prophet of God in doubt concerning the reality of God's telling?' the answer must emphatically be 'no'.(26) At-Tabari's discussion is lengthy, and some of the points he makes arise in Ibn Taymiyah's contribution to the same issue - it is, however, essential to take note of one particular statement made by him: "The expression 'if you doubt', does not make

it necessary that Muhammad doubted. (From the linguistic point of view) Arabs use such expressions, e.g., the master might say to his servant: 'If you are my servant you must do such and such' when the master has no real doubt at all that the servant addressed is his servant. Similarly an Arab might say to his son: 'If you are my son you will be kind to me.'"[27]

At-Tabari does not merely refer to colloquial use of the expression in everyday life but draws an example from the Qur'an: God asked Jesus whether Jesus had told the people: ﴾*take me and my mother as Gods, apart from God.*﴿[28] knowing full well that he had never done so. Thus the expression, as at-Tabari makes clear, is nothing more than a rhetorical device. He concludes his argument by stating that it was only natural that God should have talked to Muhammad in phraseology appropriate to the Arabs in whose language the Qur'an itself was revealed.[29]

An-Nisaburi al-Tha`alibi's (d. 427 A. H.) *Tafsir* stresses the semantic significance of the conditional: the expression "If you are in doubt" does not in any way prove either the existence or non-existence of the conditional matter; the same exegete, moreover, saw in this verse a clear proof of the fact that the People of the books had firm knowledge of the truthfulness of the Qur'an to the extent that they were in a position to argue even with Muhammad himself on the subject of his prophethood and he concludes: "The verse thus describes the Rabbis' deep knowledge of the authenticity of what God revealed to Muhammad; the verse does not describe the Prophet as having doubted."[30]

The same Qur'anic interpreter supported his argument by reference to the tradition that Muhammad commented on the manner in which he received this passage: "I neither doubt nor question, but testify that

this is the truth". An-Nisaburi's argument agrees in general with that of Ibn Hazm. He points out that "*In*" is a particle of negation "*Nafiya*" which could mean: "you are not in doubt", adding: "It is said moreover that the verse addressed any hearer who might have been in some doubt, and the people who might have doubted were Muslims converted from a Jewish or Christian stock."(31)

Al-Qurtubi's comment on the verse is to argue that it speaks to the Prophet not as an object of doubt, but as a medium through which people are commanded to ask for confirmation if they have doubts. Furthermore, he mentions that Tha`alibi and al-Mubarrad had been credited with having said that the verse referred specifically to pagan Arabs, its meaning thus being that if such pagans were in doubt about the Qur'an they should ask Muslims who had been converted from Judaism, whom they regarded as being more knowledgeable than themselves, to corroborate the veracity of the Qur'an.(32) Such an interpretation is feasible, it does however contradict Muhammad's response to the verse as reported in the tradition referred to by an-Nisaburi. Ibn Hazm's interpretation too, does not take account of this tradition and for this reason is unacceptable to the present author as being an insufficient exegesis.

A preferable interpretation is that which stresses the conditional nature of the statement as being no evidence that either Muhammad or his followers doubted God's Revelation; and which understands the people referred to in the above verse as converted Muslims.

Ibn Taymiyah seeks an answer to the problem of the verse by considering Muhammad's statement of acceptance which is related in the tradition, and by concluding that the verse insists that Jews and Christians were in possession of confirmation of Muhammad's

message. Ibn Taymiyah shows himself concerned to analyze precisely what issues were to be referred to the People of the books. Firstly, Muhammad was to ask the Jews about the way in which their scriptures confirm the warning against polytheism given by Moses and the prophets to the people (Qur'an 43:45; 21:25; 16:43). Secondly, Muhammad was to ask the Jews to confirm that God appointed men, not angels, as prophets of his message (Qur'an17:95; 23:25; 10:1-2; 6:8-9; 21:7-8). Thirdly, the People of the books were to be asked about the work of the prophets among men, and the consequences of rejecting or accepting the prophets. Fourthly, they were to be asked about the common religion, i.e., Islam, the total devotion to the will of God as the fundamental source of all religions. This constituted monotheism, and injunctions that the people should be trustworthy, just and devoted to parents and relatives. Fifthly, the People of the books should be asked whether Muhammad's message was in accordance with the previous prophets, and about the nature of Muhammad's prophecy (Qur'an 7:156-157; 61:6).[(33)] It is clear from the above that Ibn Taymiyah seeks for common ground between the three religions, however he qualifies this by insisting that the passage in the Qur'an in no way sanctions Christian practices and doctrines which have been invented and added to Jesus' original teachings, such as the doctrine of the Trinity.

Moving from the reference to the People of the Book in the Qur'anic verse cited above to the more general question of the relationship between the Qur'an and the gospels, Geoffrey Parrinder has remarked that: "There is no suggestion in the Qur'an that the Gospel given to Jesus was different from the canonical gospels held by Christians. This is a matter of importance, in view of later Muslim polemic. Indeed the Qur'an enjoins 'the People of the Gospel' to judge

by what God has sent down therein (5:41-47). It speaks of 'the Gospel in their possession (7:156-157) and urges them to follow the messenger spoken of in it. The Qur'an itself is sent down to confirm the Book which was before it, and to act as a protector over it"[34] (5:42-48). Such a statement, which makes no distinction between the Gospel revealed to Jesus and the canonical gospels is quite wrong, for several reasons: First, all the verses referred to above speak of the Gospel as a single one, behind which there is a Divine origin, but not of four variant gospels by four different writers of four different dates, nor of twenty seven books, i.e., the New Testament collection admitted later by the Church. One particular line of argument should be forestalled here. It may be argued that although the Qur'an uses '*Injil*' in the sense of a single book, it could however imply the four gospels on the basis of understanding the five books of the Torah in the word 'Torah' or the one hundred and fourteen chapters of the Qur'an in the word 'Qur'an'. Such a supposition could be supported on the basis that when the Qur'an refers to the Gospel, '*Injil*', it often refers to information present in the four canonical gospels; for example, Jesus' miraculous birth. Three major objections can be raised to such an interpretation of '*Injil*'. Firstly, although by *Injil* the Qur'an means a Book which, like the Torah and the Qur'an itself, was revealed from God; Christians do not understand 'Gospel' in this way, they believe that God revealed Himself through Jesus Christ, and in four inspired gospels, as mentioned elsewhere. Muslims object to this. Secondly, several gospels were excluded from the canon[35] which established which gospels were inspired. What then should be the attitude to these excluded gospels, which support Muslim tradition in several instances, such as Mary's dedication to the temple, causing clay sparrows to fly,[36] and Jesus' having received a Book from heaven? Reference has been already made to Nag Hammadi findings.

Thirdly, the Qur'an specifies that the '*Injil*' was revealed to Jesus but the four gospels were written by four different men, and even if they are accepted as having been revealed, the question of their Revelation to four different men rather than to Jesus himself remains unanswered.

It could be argued in conclusion that wherever the Qur'an speaks of the Gospel in the singular, it refers to that '*Injil*' in which Muslims believe. When the Qur'an charges the Christians with corruption it refers to the four canonical gospels, in which the words of Jesus are mixed with the human speculations and errors of their four authors.

The second objection to be raised to Parrinder's statement is that the exact contents of the Gospel are not indicated in the Qur'an, with one exception, this being the prophecy about Muhammad, his followers, and the Christian denial of him. (Qur'an 48:29). The third objection is that, the figure of Jesus is depicted in the Qur'an as a messenger and a word of God (not in the Christian sense), but in the extant gospels he is regarded as a Lamb of God,(37) Son of God(38) and Word of God,(39) "which became flesh", all of which are rejected by Muslims, as will be discussed later. Moreover, while Muslims do not deny Jesus and the Gospel, which are a part of their faith,(40) they generally say that Muhammad was foretold by name in the Torah and the Gospel.(41) Christians deny this foretelling, although Muslim scholars insists that if they read the Gospel correctly they must recognize Muhammad as a Prophet.

The consensus of Muslim opinion is that the Qur'anic verses refer not to the four current gospels, but to the Gospel revealed to Jesus by God: in this matter following the Islamic tradition - Ibn Hazm considers that the Gospel revealed to Jesus no longer exists in full, but that a few portions of it have been included in the four current gospels as will be discussed in depth later. In *Al-I`lam Bima `Inda An-Nasara*

Mina Al-Fasad Wa Al-Awham, al-Qurtubi says: The book which is in the hands of the Christians and which they call the *Injil* is not that of which God says, ﴾*And He has sent down the Torah and the Injil .....*﴿ (Qur'an 3:3)[42]

Ibn Taymiyah[43] and Abu al-Fadl al-Maliki al-Mas`udi,[44] both support the position above, while the writer of the footnotes to *Izhar al-Haqq* defines the Muslim attitude towards this issue in his comment on Sura 5:46 he says "The correct conclusion is that the Qur'an gives its witness to the *Injil* and the Torah which are empty of corruption, but the corrupted forms are not included in this witness. When Muslims take evidence from these scriptures they refer only to what appears to be genuine; when they attack them it is only the corrupted forms that they attack. God forbids that Muslims should believe that the Torah and the Gospel are false, the corrupted forms alone are so."[45]

Al-Qurtubi then argued that the disciples of Jesus were not prophets, hence, not protected from impurity, and the miraculous event ascribed to them have not been proved by an unbroken chain of authorities. There are only statements made by isolated narrators. Al-Qurtubi goes on to say: These gospels are not free from serious manipulation, and adulteration.

After a long discussion the same author moreover says: "It is evident from the above discussion that the present gospels have not been authenticated by means of an unbroken chain of transmission, nor is there any indication that the copies were protected from wrong action and therefore the possibility of error and fault from them cannot be overlooked. The presence of the above two factors deprives the gospels of their divine character, authenticity and hence their reliability. The proven presence of human manipulation within the text

of these gospels is enough to prove their unacceptability. We quote, however, some examples from these books to show the carelessness of their copiers and blunder made by them."

These examples (he gave) are enough to prove that the present gospels and the Pentateuch cannot be trusted and that neither of them are capable of providing a concrete evidence of their authenticity. [46]

In the same vein another capable Muslim scholar of the eighth century A. H. (fourteenth, century A. D.) al-Maqrizi, says: "The Jews think that the book which they have is true and original, free from all corruption. The Christians, on the other hand, claim that the Septuagint version of the Bible which is with them is free from any possible distortion and change, while the Jews deny this and contradict their statement. The Samaritans consider their Pentateuch to be the only genuine version as compared to all others."

There is nothing with them to eliminate the doubts about this difference of opinion among them.

The same difference of opinion is found among the Christians regarding the Evangel. For the Christians have four versions of the Evangel which have been combined together in a single book. The first version is of Matthew, the second of Mark, the third of Luke and the fourth of John.

Each of them wrote his Gospel according to his own, preaching in his own area with the help of his memory. There are innumerable contradictions, incompatibilities and inconsistencies between their various accounts regarding the attributes of Jesus, his message, the time of his crucifixion and his genealogy. The contradictions are irresolvable.

Alongside this the Marcionites and the Ebionites have their separate version of the Evangels, each being different from the present canonical gospels. The Manichaeans also claim to have an Evangel of their own totally different from the current accepted gospels.

The claim that this is the only genuine Evangel present in the world and the rest are inauthentic. They have another Evangl called the Evangel of AD to (Septuagint) which is ascribed to Ptolamaeus. The Christians in general do not recognize this Gospel as genuine. "In the presence of the above multifarious differences to be found within the corpus of the Judaeo-Christian revelation, it is almost impossible for them to sort out the truth." (47)

Imam ar-Razi in his book *Al-Matalib Al-`Aliya* in the section on prophethood says: "The influence of the original teachings of Jesus was very limited because he never preached the doctrine which the Christians ascribe to him. The idea of Father and so and the notion of Trinity are the worst kind of atheism and polytheism and are certainly the result of ignorance. Such heretical teachings can't be ascribed to a great prophet like Jesus who was free of all such sinful errors. We are therefore certain that Jesus could have not preached this impure doctrine. He originally taught monotheism but not Trinity as the Christians assert. This teachings of Jesus did not (widely) spread owing to many historical factors. His message thus remained very limited."

Ar-Razi indirectly attacked the scriptural passages of which Christians regard as the cornerstone of their doctrine. Elsewhere we have already treated ar-Razi's views on corruption that crept into the Jewish and Christian books. In the context of our answer to the Jewish authoress Hava we made it absolutely clear that al-Razi is in complete agreement with Muslim scholars with regard the corruption and alteration of these books.(48)

Astonishingly enough Hava Lazarus in her book *Intertwined Worlds*, mentions that in two of the manuscripts of Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* he says: "That the statement concerning the alteration [of the Torah by the Jews] is unacceptable to thorough scholars and cannot be understood in its plain meaning, since custom prevents people who have a [revealed] religion from dealing with their divine Scriptures in such a manner."(49)

This is a serious and far-reaching statement contradicts the Muslim firm belief in the corruption of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.

Lazarus is fully aware that the current editions of *Al-Muqqadimah* do not have such notorious statement, and it is important to note that she neither give the number of the manuscripts referred to above nor any information about them; thus it is safe to say that Ibn Khaldun's text was interpreted or misinterpreted.

Following the same line of thinking to Lazarus in her footnote also refers to Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi's (d. 607 A. H 1210 A. D) *Al-Muhassal Fi Afkar Al-Mutaqaddimin Wal-Muta'akhirin* (Cairo 1323 A. H.) P. 154. She claims that ar-Razi too, refutes all claims that Jewish Scriptures have been corrupted.(50) A claim that may likened to the wiping away of a mountain with five feathers. To be sure she found her idea a total misreading of not contortion of ar-Razi's text. For ease reference we provide a fair faithful translation of ar-Razi's true original. "As for the third evidence it is with reference to what is maintained in the Torah and gospels concerning the Prophethood of Muhammad. The objection to this evidence (on the Jewish and Christian side) is whether you (Muslims) say that the description of Muhammad was written in these books in detail; namely that Allah Almighty, made

manifest that he shall come in the coming years and in such and such country, a person whose description shall be such and such, and so know you that he is my messenger. On the one hand; or they say: 'No, but rather Allah has merely referred to him briefly, without specification due to time, place or personality.' And so if you hold on to the first claim it false and faulty; (O, you Muslims.)"

That is because we (Jews and Christians) find that the T and the G are empty of such claims; and must not be said that the Jews and the Christians have compared two scriptures; because we (Jews and Christians) say that these two scriptures and well-known in the east and the west; and such as these books cannot, in any way be overtaken by corruption exactly as in the case of the Qur'an. Alternatively: If you (Muslims) hold on to the second claim, even if we suppose that you are right to hold that view, then this cannot be taken as a proof in support of prophethood; or perhaps it may only allude the coming of a virtuous and noble person. Or even if it is alluding to a prophethood, it is not necessarily indicating the Prophethood of Muhammad, since it may also foretell the advent of another messenger, other than Muhammad.(51)

Hava Lazarus failed to catch up with the high flown language grand style peculiar to the celebrated philosopher, and theologian and Qur'anic interpreter Fạkhr ad-Din ar-Razi in his *Tafsir*: *The Book of Prophethood* emphasize facet of corruption in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.

Finally in this context it should also be pointed out that Hava Lazarus also argued against the Muslim claim that Ezra, the scribe, was said to have recovered.

Torah after it had been burned and destroyed with Fall the Temple, Hava based her arguments on some Jewish legendary says

that crept into some Muslim books like at-Tabari's *Tafsir*, al-Tha`alibi's *Qasas al-Anbia'*.[52]

But it is beyond the scope of this book developed & pursue such a trend.

In order to develop the argument raised by Muslim authorities on the subject of the gospels, the Christian view of the Gospel should be stated. St. Athanasius describes the concept of Revelation through Jesus as follows: "The word has been manifested in a body or Jesus; the Lord used a human body to manifest the truth and knowledge of the Father."[53]

The conception of Revelation from the Christian point of view is not merely related to, but based upon the doctrine of the Trinity, as indicated by Ignatius, who describes Jesus as "The unlying mouth by which the Father spoke truly 'as our God' and as 'God incarnate'."[54]

Since the conception of the Gospel stands as a matter of sharp difference between Christians and Muslims, an investigation of the etymology and theology of the word "Gospel" is required. 'Gospel' is the modern form of the Anglo-Saxon word 'godspell', representing the medieval Latin bona annuntiotio and hence of the Greek euangelion, originally the reward for good news and then good news itself. Later it came to refer to the good news itself. It then came to be applied to the good news proclaimed by and centering in Jesus, and this is the New Testament usage, as Hunter points out; later still it was applied to canonical "memoirs" of Christ.[55] The word also refers to the four gospels. Justin Martyr (c. 152 A. C.) who gave the gospels their names also called them "memoirs of the Apostles"[56] In view of the above the word evangelion denotes the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, including glad tidings about Jesus himself.[57] It also refers to a written

account of the life of Jesus as preserved in the four gospels.[58] The word gospel implies the utterances of Jesus, the teachings that he taught his disciples, and which he ascribed wholly to God. If this be the case, then the utterances and the teachings of Jesus would be the *Injil*, the Gospel or the surviving part of it to which the Qur'an refers, and upon which the consensus of Muslim opinion is agreed. This aspect will be dealt with later.

Symbolically, the Gospel means Jesus himself. Concerning the Prologue of John, C.K. Barrette comments: "He begins with Christ, the eschatological fulfillment of God's purposes, and with the fundamental conviction that Christ Himself is the Gospel, the word which God has spoken."[59]

Thus the definition of the Gospel is intimately linked with the doctrine of the Trinity and Incarnation.

A Christian writer, Ibrahim Luqa, says: "Jesus had not received a book from heaven but he himself had prepared his teachings and preached them to the people. He neither received this teaching himself, nor arranged for it to be written, but he transmitted it orally to his selected Apostles whom he sent to many different areas to proclaim his message and to teach other people. In this sense they are regarded as his Apostles. Jesus promised them before he departed from them that he would not leave them as orphans but he would send the Holy Spirit to them to teach them everything and to remind them what he had said to them.[60] The same writer goes on to say that this promise was fulfilled at Pentecost on the fiftieth day after the ascension. Thus the four gospels were written from four different points of view 'Yet the gospels are one that bears four faces and not four distinct gospels as Muslims thought.'"[61]

It is worth noting that the last passage in the above quotation seems to apply to the gospels the ambiguity in number of the Christian Trinity.

However, M. H. `Abd al-`Aziz argues for the validity of the Muslim belief in a single Divine book, referring to many passages in the evangelists which mention "a Gospel", or "the Gospel"(62) The flaw in `Abd al-`Aziz's argument is his understanding of "the Gospel" as indicating a single book.

A Christian writer, W. Cantwell Smith, regarded the Muslim view as a misinterpretation of the Gospel, an error which should be recognized by Christians and historians of religion. "For Muslims to say that Jesus brought the *Injil* is as though Christians were to say of Muhammad that he brought the *Sahihan* or *Al-Kutub As-Sittah.*"(63) The above remark suggests that the parallel is to be drawn between the four gospels and Islamic tradition, rather than the Qur'an and the four gospels, on the basis that both writings are considered to be records of the sayings and events of Jesus and Muhammad which were collected and written by the disciples of the two men. Muslims would accept a comparison of their Tradition with the four gospels, but they attach more authenticity to the *Hadith*, Tradition, than the four gospels.(64) It should be noted that Muslims claim to be just as cautious in accepting the Tradition as do some free-thinking Christians with regard to their scriptures. Muslims possess what they call *Isnad*, an uninterrupted chain of authorities on which a Tradition is based, i.e., one must know the time and the place at which the passage was uttered, the people who first heard and narrated it, the people who transmitted it person to person from Prophet Muhammad down to the *Hafiz* or the last narrator. Everything concerning the Tradition is well-examined. Ibn Hazm regards this meticulous method as a means of authenticating Tradition,

and one of the unique privileges of Islam, which according to him, is not to be found in other religions.[65] The question of how the Christian Tradition was transmitted and corrupted will be treated later.

Ibn Hazm is fully aware that unlike the Jewish belief in the Torah, Christians do not consider their gospels to be sent from heaven.

His view that the gospels are neither revealed nor inspired is supported by numerous examples as is shown throughout this book. Nevertheless he argues for the existence of the *Injil*, the Gospel in which Muslims believe. He refers to Mark 16, 15-18 in which Jesus commanded his disciples to go out into the world and preach the Gospel for all nations, regarding this command as indicating a Gospel brought to them by Jesus from God. This Gospel, according to Ibn Hazm, is no longer in the possession of the Christians; instead they have four gospels written by four authors a long time after Jesus' ascension. Thus the Gospel to which Jesus referred was lost. Ibn Taymiyah considers that this Gospel was in existence during Muhammad's lifetime, although other writers hold that it was destroyed earlier; the question of how it was destroyed will be discussed in the context of the corruption.

Ibn Hazm builds up a further body of references which support his conception of the *Injil*. He refers to John 8.26 ff:

> " I have much to say about you and much to judge;
> but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world
> what I have heard from him"

They did not understand that he spoke to them of the Father. So Jesus said,

> "When you have lifted up the son of man, then you
> will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my

> own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me, he has not left me alone for I always do what is pleasing to him."

He regards this as Jesus' declaration of himself as a man who transmitted God's word.[66] The implication of Ibn Hazm's comment is that the things taught to Jesus by God, and entrusted to Jesus constitute the Revelation or the *Injil.* This "Revelation" differs of course from the Christian view of Revelation as God revealing Himself through Jesus. The same author strengthens his argument by drawing on Isaiah's prophecy of Jesus which states; "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased." Matthew 12:18 and Isaiah 1:42, and which he understands as conclusive proof that Jesus was a prophet and servant of God. If Jesus were a prophet he must have received a Revelation from God in the shape of words which he was required to transmit, and this is clearly indicated in John 12:49-50

> "For I have not spoken on my own authority; the father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the father has bidden me."

Jesus' role as a prophetic instrument is unambiguous here.[67]

Whenever Ibn Hazm speaks of Jesus as a prophet he implies the existence of the *Injil.* Developing this line of thought, reference could be made to John 7:16, where Jesus replied to the Jews' amazement at his learning by saying: "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me". Here Jesus explicitly drew attention to the fact that his learning was not the result of human efforts, but had been taught them by God.

This is in harmony with the Qur'an 3:48: ﴿*He will teach him the Book, the Wisdom, the Torah, the Gospel, to be a messenger to the children of Israel*﴾; and 5:117 ﴿*I only said to them what Thou didst command me.*﴾ Furthermore John assigns the following words to Jesus: "For I have given them the words which thou gavest me and they received them; and know in truth that I came from thee and they have believed that thou didst send me!" (John 17:8), and also describes himself as "a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God" (John 8:40). Jesus here defines himself as a man and prophet who received and transmitted the words of God, not as an emanation from God, nor as God incarnate; in no way can God be called man or prophet.(68) Jesus describes his utterances as God's speech, *Kalamu Allah*; the term used to describe the Qur'an and all the revealed books.(69)

This argument for Jesus' prophethood as explained above could be criticized on the basis of a difficult problem that it naturally raises. All the prophets of the past introduced God's message with the formula "Thus speaks Yahwah"(70) or like Muhammad these use the formula "God says" which introduces God's speech in the Qur'an. If Jesus had received a Revelation which Muslims unhesitatingly call the *Injil* why, it could be asked, does he use the form "I say", as if he speaks on his own authority?(71) Could this be a sign that Jesus' person occupies the position or the role of God in the Old Testament? It is a paradox that although Jesus ascribed what he said wholly to God as indicated above, he differs from all other prophets by using unconventional formulae to introduce his message. There are two possible solutions to this difficulty. Firstly it could be argued that Jesus adopts a style peculiar to himself. When he refers to the Torah or to other Old Testament books he introduces them by saying "It is written in the book" or "in the Law", or "Moses wrote about me" etc. (John 8:55), when it is generally established that the Torah is from God. Thus Jesus

makes use of a personal style whether he is referring to the Old Testament or when he is indicating his own particular message.

Secondly, it could be argued that the personal pronoun was put in place of the usual prophetic formula by the evangelists who wished to herald Jesus as God.

The question of corruption

The question of corruption of biblical texts is a major bone of contention among the three communities, Jews, Christians and Muslims. A great deal has been written about it throughout the centuries; even before Islam, the texts have been attacked because of inconsistencies, errors and contradictions in them. There has always been heated discussion about this topic. The People of the books always ask how God's message can be corrupt? Can God's word fail? When did the corruption take place? Who is responsible for it? We shall address this question in this chapter, but first there is something that I should like to point out. Different arguments on the subject of corruption have helped the development of the sciences of textual criticism, the study of comparative religion, interfaith studies, oriental studies and so on. This in itself has given rise to specialist departments in the universities, where scholars defend their own position and try to shake their opponents' position. As I have mentioned earlier, modern biblical criticism gives support to the Muslim claim of corruption. Jews and Christians need to reconsider their position in the light of the Muslim arguments. Why, for example, if the Torah was corrupt, did Jesus not mention its shortcomings? As a prophet he could not use a false text and quote from it. There is an ingenious objection; one could say that the prophet cannot deal with everything. Jesus came for a special purpose and with a special message. John the Baptist, for

example, came to warn people and to command them to repent, in preparation for the coming of the Kingdom of God. That was his sole function. Lot came only to attack the homosexuality practiced by his people, and nothing else. Jesus himself made it clear that the Paraclete, another being like himself, would come after him and tell them what he himself could not. This means that Jesus did not say everything. This supports our viewpoint that each prophet comes with a specific message and keeps within its limits. So we cannot take as evidence Jesus' silence about corruption of Jewish books that these books are sound. Readers will see that almost all modern biblical critics give credence to the Muslims' claim that the Bible has been corrupted. We are speaking from a position of belief, not as enemies wishing to destroy and reject. Muslims believe in Jesus, and believe equally in his heavenly book and Divine message which brought great benefit to mankind.

Ibn Hazm introduces his argument concerning textual corruption by saying that both Jews and Christians have distorted the Torah and the gospels by *Tabdil* and *Tahrif*, changing and twisting the words.(72) He produces many examples to prove his point as will be seen later. In a more general attack on the relationship between the Jewish Bible, the Septuagint (or LXX, the first Greek version of the Old Testament made at Alexandria in the third century B.C.) and the Samaritan Pentateuch, which he finds to contradict one another, he points out that the Christian and Jewish Torah are different. On the basis of the different ages of the Patriarchs he concludes that the chronology of the Septuagint adds 1,300 years to the age of the world.(73) Thus it can be deduced either that Ezra copied the Hebrew correctly and the Septuagint is wrong; or that Ezra miscopied the Hebrew. "Whichever alternative is accepted, both parties believe in what is untrue."(74) Ibn Hazm's criticisms that indicate the differences between the texts are

supported by other scholars.[75] He also refers to variations between the Septuagint and the Torah and the Pentateuch of the Samaritans.[76]

In the context of transmission Ibn Hazm begins by discrediting Christian *Isnad* or ascription, and casting doubt on the authority of the Christian narrators. He applies Islamic methodology to the Christian tradition.

The gospels were not transmitted by *Tawatur*, unbroken succession. They had come down to Christians through three agents only: Paul, Mark and Luke, and these three had taken their material from only five sources; Peter, Matthew, John, James and Jude.[77] Paul says that he was with Peter only for fifteen days[78] when they first met, and their next meeting only occupied a brief time. The third time they met they were crucified. The five figures from whom the three agents draw their material were subjected to persecution and execution to such an extent that they were effectively scattered after Jesus' arrest; and Christians remained scattered until the time of Constantine (d. 337 A.C.), when they began to show themselves openly and to lead a more stable life. It could be argued that since Ibn Hazm recognizes the trials undergone by the Apostles he has no grounds for finding them personally culpable of corrupting the *Injil*. Their guilt, however, lies in their failure to recognize or admit the fact of corruption, claiming that everything they wrote was inspired by God.

Ibn Hazm's view of the position of Christians after Jesus' death is clearly determined by his general attitude to the authenticity and authority of The Acts of the Apostles. This calls for some comment. Acts relate the status and pattern of early Christian worship, and provide evidence that Christians were gathering in groups and practicing their faith in the public eye at an early date (Acts 2:5-42). It is clear that they were free to go to the synagogue and evangelize

(Acts 6:7) and that they attracted converts from among the rabbis. Persecutions which scattered them throughout Judea and Samara (8:1ff) were succeeded by a period of stability (9:31) and controversial issues relating to Christian practices were discussed and resolved (15:6-21). In the light of the information relating to the early Christians in Acts, which suggest that they had the opportunity to practice their faith publicly and in private, collectively and individually - it is striking that Ibn Hazm presents a very different picture of Christian activity at this date. Was he ignorant of the evidence in Acts, or did he intentionally ignore it to suit his purpose in discounting *Isnad*?

The first possibility cannot be maintained since the author of *Al-Faisal* was clearly familiar with the text.(79) He provided a good description of it, its possible authorship, size, etc.(80) He himself quoted from it,(81) and compared the miracles related in it with those of other religious sects, considering them to be false.(82) As for the second possibility, Ibn Hazm's discounting of the evidence in Acts is less a matter of deliberate, expedient omission than the consequence of Acts failing to fulfill the requirements of an authoritative text. In common with other Muslims, he would have found the information given in Acts unacceptable because it had not been transmitted by the masses to the masses, and was not traceable to eye witnesses. The rejection of information carried in Acts is then, a consequence of its being based on the work of a single author.(83)

Given the circumstances of the early Christians as described by the author of *Al-Faisal* Jesus' followers were in no position to keep and protect the *Injil* given to them intact by Jesus. According to Ibn Hazm God protected those parts of the *Injil* that he wished to stand as a testimony against corruption, and as proof of the truthfulness of

Islam. This falls within Ibn Hazm's general outlook which states that the existence of negation or falsehood necessitates the existence of truth.[84] The differences among the people "of the religions" do not prove that there is no truth at all in their utterances, or that their true utterances cannot be distinguished from those which are false. He says that Jews and Christians necessarily have both truth and falsehood in their scriptures.[85] This leads directly to the question of how it is possible to mine out the truth in the Christian dogma and scriptures. Ibn Hazm argues that this task must be undertaken on the basis of reasoning and Revelation;[86] for instance he rejects the Christian belief in Christ's divinity on the basis that it is irrational, and furthermore this leads him to reject those texts on which Christians claim to base such a belief. The argument of a reasonable foundation is supported by the argument based on Revelation in that the Qur'an, as God's Revelation, sanctions the objection to Christ's divinity. Ibn Hazm does not reproach Jews or Christians for the contradictions and mistakes per se in their scriptures but for their ascription of them to God. His objections are directed towards the failure of Jews and Christians to investigate properly the process of transmission or to admit the possibility that mistakes had crept into their texts. Muslims deny that God could be responsible for lies, or the acceptance of transmitters as infallible people. It is necessary to make a minute and systematic examination of those responsible for transmission.

Ibn Hazm makes a plea for Christians to sift the material in their possession rather than simply accepting it as it is, and expresses the wish that they might countenance the possibility that transmitters might have committed errors. This having been done it would be possible to correct or reject mistakes on the Muslim scheme. Once again this leads the discussion to the question of how Jesus' true speech can best be distinguished from words that have falsely been put

into his mouth. Ibn Hazm did not attempt to identify the genuine Gospel in toto - an undertaking which could not be expected from a literalist conscious that neither the Qur'an nor tradition had set a precedent for such a task. Nevertheless, his work does indicate some passages which he clearly regards as part of the real *Injil* as compared with others which he considers to be irrefutably corrupted. The criterion on which his distinctions are made is the Qur'an itself - he accepts what is consistent with the Qur'an and rejects what is incompatible with it, this latter understood as passages specifically denied in the Qur'an or implicitly contradictory.

Ibn Hazm's categorization of passages relating to the identity of the true *Injil* can be set forward in three groups.

Firstly, he fully accepts certain passages, for example, Luke 4:24, describing this as part of what God protected and kept as a testimony against Christians.(87) Likewise he accepts those verses which argue for Jesus' humanity and prophethood and the references to the Paraclete which he understands to constitute a prophecy about Muhammad. In this context it is noteworthy that Ibn Hazm's reference to the Paraclete does not correspond to any of the four references in John (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:17). The text of *Al-Faisal* states that the prophecies concerning Muhammad in the Torah "are accompanied by those in the *Injil* concerning Jesus' prayer to God; "send down the Paraclete to teach the people that the son of man is human",(88) followed by the comment: "This is perfectly clear for whosoever is ready to understand; when Jesus knew that his followers would exaggerate his status, insisting that he was God, or the son of God, he prayed that He might send down (the Paraclete) who would clarify the fact that he was neither a deity nor the son of the deity, but a man born of woman".(89) Ibn Hazm goes on to ask whether any prophet

succeeding Jesus clarified this point, other than Muhammad. The above passage concerning Jesus' prayer to God in *Al-Faisal* represents an unusual error from such an exact critic, and the recent discovery and publication of Ibn Hazm's *Al-Usul Wa Al-Furu`* suggests that it is an editorial error. This book gives the complete picture of the identification between the Paraclete and the prophet made by Ibn Hazm. The other passages in John concerning the same issue are discussed but the quotations differ from those in the current version, and correspond closely to Ibn Rabban's version.(90) Ibn Hazm comments on the passages that "despite the differences between them they are close (in meaning). They differ because the Apostles who took them from Jesus were many". The explanation of the passages in *Al-Usul* is worth quoting at length: "Who is this, the spirit of truth, who does not speak on his own but through what is revealed to him? and who is this who came after Jesus and gave his witness to what Jesus brought (from heaven) ... and who declared the truth, and foretold the unseen things such as the coming of the anti-Christ or the one-eyed liar and those matters concerning the Day of Judgment, the coming, the Hell-fire and Paradise which are not mentioned in the Torah, the Gospel and the Psalter - except our Prophet Muhammad."(91)

It is very interesting that our author refers to Matthew 11:14 "And if you are willing to accept it, this is Elijah, who is to come", and follows this with the comment: "This name (Elijah) can be understood in a number of ways. Firstly, it is possible that he (Jesus) said 'Ahmad' is to come, but they changed the name, substituting Elijah instead. Secondly, Jesus may have said 'iluhim' or 'il' was to come, meaning 'God is to come'. The coming of God is the sending of Revelation, and no sacred book has come after Jesus except the Qur'an. Thirdly, it is possible that Jesus intended something - not necessarily a person - and called that something Elijah."(92)

The above quotation reveals Ibn Hazm's firm belief in the prophecy of Muhammad appearing in the Gospel, although he does not specifically refer here to the Qur'an, 61:6. In this passage the Qur'an employs the word "Ahmad" rather than "Muhammad" to name the Prophet.

Leaving aside the problem of the quotation, it is important that Ibn Hazm should have been interested in identifying the Paraclete with a Prophet who followed Jesus, and who must have been Muhammad on the basis of the (mistaken) quotation in *Al-Faisal*. Unlike some earlier and later Muslims, Ibn Hazm does not develop this argument further - there is a broad range of arguments surrounding the identity of the Paraclete in both Muslim and non-Muslim scholarship.

Secondly, Ibn Hazm recognizes that some verses in the Gospel accounts may be true - he does not commit himself to saying that they are remnants of the true *Injil*, but he does not exclude the possibility that they could be. An example of this can be found in his comment on Matthew 16:19-24. He begins with an outright denial that Jesus offered the keys of heaven to Peter: "By God I swear that Jesus never said such a thing",[93] such an authorization being, in his view, destructive to the omnipotence of God, but he recognizes the possibility that Jesus' rebuke to Peter which follows in the text may be correct: "It is not impossible that he uttered the last statement."[94]

Thirdly, as indicated above, the author of *Al-Faisal* absolutely denies certain verses which purport to be the utterances of Jesus; introducing his comments with a series of phrases such as: "By God, Jesus never said so", "This could not have come from God, nor a prophet, nor an infallible source, nor an honest scholar, from among the people", "By God, nobody but a liar could have said this, it could not have come from God."[95]

These three categories represent the general outline within which Ibn Hazm suggests to his reader the actual utterances of Jesus.

The question of how God safeguarded those verses welcomed as genuine by the author of *Al-Faisal* is not one that its author considers as relevant. The fact that God chose to protect parts of the Gospel only is a matter of God's will, which is beyond question; however parallels are drawn between the destruction of certain parts of the true Gospel, the loss of some ancient sacred books and the murder of some of the prophets, some of whom were martyred for the greater glory of God. Moreover, God preserved the essential part of the revealed Gospel to stand as a witness against those people who failed to keep the Gospel intact. Nevertheless the reason behind God's will concerning the survival of the Gospel, rather than the consequences of His will, lies beyond the understanding of men, it is "as God wishes" and to query those would be fruitless.

The author of *Al-Faisal* seems to reject the idea that the correct passages in the extant gospels have been either transmitted by an unbroken chain of authorities - a view which is supported by all Muslim scholars with the exception of an insignificant minority to which Ibn Hazm refers in *Al-Faisal* and which he rejects as ignorant of the Qur'an and Tradition - or that they are revealed or inspired(96) as has been discussed earlier in this thesis. In this context the Qur'anic verse which states that the disciples of Jesus had been inspired by God to believe in Him and His messenger, Jesus(97) should be noted - it does not, however, constitute a generalization which can be taken to embrace the term inspiration as understood by Christians. Moreover, in the Qur'an God endowed Jesus with the Holy Spirit only as all His prophets and messengers were endowed. In common with all Muslims Ibn Hazm denied the disciples and Apostles as prophets or capable of

performing miracles as discussed above. Thus the author under review ascribed the operation of safeguarding some of the revealed Gospel to God Himself but rejected the possibility that this had been managed by an unbroken chain of authorities; he does not feel impelled to go into the question of how God could have preserved, a part at least, of the true Gospel, in depth.

On the subject of such an important issue the author of this thesis has accounted it worthwhile to suggest an answer which would be faithful to Ibn Hazm's own outlook.

It has already been mentioned that Ibn Hazm does not exclude the possibility of a true written Gospel - this is clear from his phrases: "The Gospel has been lost except for a few portions", and "God has taken it away". Has He taken some of the previous Revelation away? It is possible that God removed those parts of the true Gospel at the time when Christians began to add to or omit from the scriptures. If this is the case, the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a single, complete volume was removed, surviving only in partial form, either in the memory of the disciples, or as an actual text which was introduced into the gospels by the evangelists but mixed with human additions which they regarded as divinely inspired. It seems likely that Ibn Hazm considers that those parts of the true Gospel removed by God can be inferred from the Qur'an. However, a significant problem arises from this: if the idea of an unbroken chain of authorities is excluded by Ibn Hazm, how can he allow himself to accept any parts of a Gospel that has been transmitted by authors outside the accepted system of *Isnad*? If some parts are corrupted by failing to fulfill the demands of *Isnad*, why not all?

Interestingly enough Ibn Hazm addressed himself to precisely this area of difficulty in his objections to a small Muslim group who

acknowledged *Isnad* with reference to the Jewish and Christian scriptures. He would appear to have had no direct contact with this group, nor to have seen any of their writings if such existed, stating simply that "we have been told (about them)" and from this they would seem to have exerted insignificant contemporary influence.

The reference to them in *Al-Faisal*, being of such importance to Ibn Hazm's own attitude to the four gospels, is worth quoting at length: "We have been told of a number of Muslims who, out of ignorance, deny that the Torah and *Injil* have been corrupted at the hands of Jews and Christians. The reason which caused them (this group of Muslims) to maintain this is their lack of knowledge of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*."[(98)]

He then refers to the Qur'anic passage which mentions the corruption, which will be discussed in detail later in this book, and continues: "We say to those Muslims who hold that their (Jewish and Christian) transmission has come through an unbroken chain of authorities and is necessarily true knowledge which can be taken as evidence, that no doubt Jews and Christians would agree that what they received and reported of Moses and Jesus contains no reference to Muhammad and no prophecies of his prophethood. If they (the group of Muslims) acknowledge such reports in part, they must also acknowledge them in full, whether they like it or not. If they think them (Jews and Christians) liars in some of their reports but not in others they are guilty of obstinate contradiction. It is impossible that the tradition which comes through a single channel can be partly true and partly false ... we do not know how a Muslim could make it lawful to deny the corruption of their Torah and *Injil* while he hears the speech of God telling him that Muhammad was foretold in both sacred books, and nothing like this exists in the books in the hands of Jews

and Christians which they claim to be the Torah and *Injil*. It is necessary that those ignorant Muslims should either believe the word of their God - that Jews and Christians have changed the Torah and *Injil*, or that they should become fools and unbelievers in God's word. If this is so, the evidence of corruption we have shown in those books must be raised against all of them together ... what we have discovered as evidence of the corruption and lies in the four gospels are clear to the extent that if there was no scriptural evidence of the extent to which Jews and Christians have corrupted their texts we could be as sure of their distortion as we would be of the evidence of our senses."(99)

Research has failed to identify the particular group of Muslims to which Ibn Hazm refers or to discover the theoretical basis of their thought, and such a task is beyond the scope of this book.

The relevance of Ibn Hazm's objections to the Muslim group he mentions is, of course, his argument that tradition transmitted through a single channel cannot be true in part only. If this is applied to his own distinction between true and false in the four gospels and the classification noted above it would appear to undermine his own argument. However, it should be emphasized that in this instance he does not base his distinctions on the ground of *Isnad*, but on Revelation, that is, the Qur'an. As a strict believer in the Qur'an he accepts those verses which, as the word of God, refer to the Gospel of Jesus as having been revealed to him, and as containing guidance. Likewise he accepts those verses which describe the corruption of this Gospel which, as he understands it, consists of omission or addition. Concerning the safeguarding of some Divine portions of that Gospel, the author of *Al-Faisal* regarded God himself as the agent of protection. In this the argument relating to *Isnad* is subsumed in the higher argument of direct Divine intervention. Thus Ibn Hazm

constructs his theory of corruption on the one hand, but the Divine energy of safeguarding on the other, on a Qur'anic basis. During his entire examination of the four gospels in which his reasoning and critical powers discover certain contradictions and mistakes he never loses sight of the central reference point of the Qur'an and the necessity of proving what the Qur'an maintains.

In conclusion to his discussion of the gospels Ibn Hazm states that whatever was revealed in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet is acceptable; whatever is either discredited by the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, or demonstrates its own falsity, is to be rejected. Any portion that is neither sanctioned nor discredited could be true or false and Muslims should neither believe nor disbelieve it. The author of *Al-Faisal* supports his conclusions by reference to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* as shall be shown later, and finally allies himself with the comment of Ibn `Abbas as related by al-Bukhari: "How can you ask the People of the Book about anything when your own book, which was revealed to the Prophet by God is fresh (recently revealed). You can read it, crystal-clear, unmixed, and it tells you that the People of the Book have changed the Book of God, the Almighty, and have altered it. They wrote it with their own hands and then sold it cheap saying that it came from God."(100)

Ibn Hazm describes this as: "the soundest *Isnad* or ascription to Ibn `Abbas, which is exactly our view. There is no difference between the companions on this matter."(101)

His reference to "the soundest *Isnad*" is an implicit rejection of a tradition that Ibn `Abbas said that the *Tahrif* occurred in exegesis rather than the letter of the Torah, which had not suffered change. Ibn Hazm clearly discounts this tradition and those who follow it, as mentioned before.(102) I agree with *Al-Faisal*'s distinction between

traditions here - Ibn `Abbas' statement that exegesis rather than text was false was most probably made on a particular occasion with reference to a particular scriptural passage and cannot be taken as a general statement. The tradition related by al-Bukhari correctly records Ibn `Abbas' understanding of corruption as being in the text itself. A fuller examination of the meaning of corruption will be provided later in this book.

Ibn Hazm's argument that the four gospels contain small portions of the actual revealed Gospel should be set against other opinions concerning the extent of the survival of the actual Gospel. Ibn Taymiyah indicates the range of views on this matter. "Some Muslims, and some People of the Book, hold that the actual words of the scriptures have been changed. Of those people some consider the corrupted portions to be large in number, and regard them as more numerous than the sound. This is especially so in the case of the gospels in which the areas of weakness are more obvious than the Torah. A few would go so far as to state that the scriptures are altogether empty of sacredness, while others would regard those passages which have suffered textual change as minor, a more obvious viewpoint. Most, however, maintain that the four gospels contain but a few of God's words."[(103)]

Ibn Hazm clearly belongs with this latter group, as has been indicated above. Ibn Taymiyah defined his own position by concluding that it was best to consider the Torah and *Injil* in the hands of the People of the Book as containing some of God's commandments. His reference to the People of the Book in the quotation above is interesting, whether he was in fact referring to orthodox Christians, declared Christian heretics, or People of the Book who had converted to Islam is not clear. Quite unambiguous, however,

is the character of the corruption to which the author refers in his description of the range of attitudes to the survival of the actual Gospel:- it is a matter of textual rather than exegetical falseness.

Having presented the views of Ibn Hazm on the transmission of the Christian tradition in the context of Muslim thinking it is important to sketch out the Christian interpretation of the same matter as a point of comparison. It is not possible, of course, to provide a full account but an indication of the areas of coincidence and difference can at least be suggested. Irenaeus points to the problems of defining authoritative tradition in his comment on contemporary heretics: "When they are refuted out of the scriptures they betake them to accusing the scriptures themselves as if there were something amiss with them and they carried no authority, because the scriptures, they say, contain diverse utterances, and because the truth cannot be found in them by those that know not the tradition. For that, they say, has been handed down not by means of writings but by means of the living voice..."[(104)]

Clearly at this date the precise location of the authority of tradition, whether it was discoverable in the scriptures themselves, or existed in some area of oral tradition external to the texts, was a matter of dispute. Irenaeus complains that the heretics to whom he refers appeal to their individual understanding as authorizing tradition, and counters this with an appeal to "that tradition which is derived from the Apostles, and which is safeguarded in the churches through the successions of presbyters."[(105)] He emphasizes the known succession of bishops transmitted through the church and traceable back to the Apostles who "have lodged all that there is of truth with her, (the church) as with a rich bank, holding back nothing."[(106)] Unorthodoxy is to be determined by its failure to recognize the primitive

succession[107] as the test of doctrine: "All doctrine which accords with those apostolic churches, the sources and originals of the Faith, must be reckoned as the truth, since it preserves without doubt what the churches received from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, and Christ from God..."[108]

Irenaeus' conception of unbroken tradition has some parallels to the Islamic notion of *Isnad* but, as can be seen in the following quotation, is far less vigorous in its requirements: "An unbroken succession from the beginning so that the first bishop (of any church) had as his precursor and the source of his authority one of the Apostles or one of the Apostolic men who, though not an Apostle, continued with the Apostles."[109]

Irenaeus, while noting that the objections of heretics could focus on what they regarded as "diverse utterances" in the scriptures, raising precisely that problem to which Muslims have applied themselves to study, answers those heretics in terms which are far more general and which do not really clarify or solve this difficulty. His description of the transmission of tradition does not specify either exactly what constitutes tradition - whether it is the utterances of Jesus, forms of worship etc., or a firmly-drawn rationale for transmission in the shape of describing, for example, the times and places of transmission or an exact definition of authority. The phrase "apostolic men" is, for instance, in sharp contrast to the Islamic clarity on the number and identity of Muhammad's Companions.

In more recent times Stott has argued that there is a sharp distinction between scripture, which is Divine and obligatory; and tradition, which is human and optional and which must be tested against and sanctioned by scripture.[110] He makes the point that the balance between the authority of scripture and that of tradition was a

central element in the upheaval of the Reformation, Rome insisting that scripture did not constitute the sole authority, but required a parallel acceptance of "unwritten traditions".[111] From the point of view of the reformed churches "the only 'tradition' which scripture recognizes is scripture. For 'tradition' (Greek paradosis) is what is handed down, and God's purpose has been that His word, His unique Revelation given to prophets and Apostles, should be transmitted from generation to generation. So the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: 'What you have heard from me ... entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also'.[112] (From Paul to Timothy, from Timothy to faithful men, and from them to others also)."[113]

Stott argues that scripture is apostolic tradition, while ecclesiastical tradition is the teaching of the church.[114]

Ibn Hazm's arguments against the gospels as inspired or revealed is inextricably linked to his conception of *Isnad* as the test of authenticity. The absence of evidence of *Isnad* leads him to conclude that the gospels could not have been written by Jesus' disciples, nor by faithful people. Western scholarship has also concerned itself with the authority of the Christian gospels and has provided material that could be considered to add substantial weight to the complaints of the author of *Al-Faisal* regarding the lack of *Isnad* in the Christian tradition.

Streeter, for example, points out that the designation by the early church of certain texts as authentic must now be recognized as subject to error and revision. 2 Peter and James, for example, were not generally received for centuries, despite their antiquity and orthodoxy. If acceptance was slow to arrive for some texts, other texts which were not apostolic were incorrectly designated so: "That the church accepted as Apostolic certain writings which in point of fact were not so, is undoubted".[115] Wikenhauser also points out that the Canon

remained flexible for a considerable period of time, and that by 200 A. C. "The New Testament at this time is not a closed collection."[116] The Islamic argument for the original existence of an uncorrupted true Gospel of Jesus also has its parallel in various suppositions made by Western scholars regarding the sources of the four gospels. Eusebius' comment on Matthew: "so then Matthew composed the oracles (Tahoxia) in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he could"[117] had led many scholars, as Streeter points out, to hypothesize the existence of "a lost collection of the sayings of the Lord, or a collection of proof-texts."[118] Streeter's important work details the complex issues of the relationships between the different early churches that prompted a variety of attitudes towards the authority of certain texts.[119]

It is no matter for surprise that the controversies apparent in Western scholarship regarding the authority and sources of the Christian scriptures should have been traced by Muslim scholars. Rahmatullah, for example, emphasizing the absence of *Isnad* in the Christian texts points out that the position that Matthew 'might' have been written originally in Hebrew and then translated into Greek, or 'might' have been written in Greek, demonstrates that conjecture, rather than *Isnad*, is the basis on which the authority of the Gospel text is established.[120] Furthermore he rehearses the problem of canonical acceptance to which, as has been pointed out above, Streeter and Wikenhauser addressed themselves. The epistles of James, Jude, the second epistle of Peter, and the second and third of John were ascribed, without evidence, to the Apostles, and remained doubtful until 363 A.C., while John's apocalypse was doubtful until 397 A.C. He points out that Peter's second epistle, Jude's epistle, and John's second and third epistles and Revelation have been rejected by Arab Christians. He refers to the work of a critic which states that such

epistles were not included in the early Christian church, and pointed out that in the Syriac translation the texts mentioned above, and verses 2-11 in John's Gospel chapter two, and the seventh verse of chapter V of John's first epistle are omitted. Indicating the activity of the first Council of Nicea he notes that six epistles and Revelations were rejected. He continues by arguing that in spite of Origen's statement that Paul had written something to all churches, the epistles ascribed to Paul are not wholly his - his epistle to the Hebrews not having been included by several churchmen.(121) Even if Paul's epistles are truly his, Rahmatullah ibn Khalil insists on Paul's unacceptability to Muslims. The other disciples, however, who lived after Jesus' ascension can be compared with the good *Mujtahidun* - legists who formulate independent decisions in legal and theological matters, and who are thus liable to mistakes. *Isnad* is absent in the crucial period preceding the last decade of the second century. For example, the original text of Matthew is missing. Bearing in mind that the disciples failed to understand Jesus on many occasions, and that Luke and Mark were not Jesus' disciples, it is impossible that the gospels should have been inspired, according to Rahmatullah ibn Khalil.(122)

In the writings of Justine Martyr there is a complete suppression of Paul and his letters, there is not even a single quote from the Paulin Corpus, nor is the Apostle ever referred to. On the other hand, his writings contain quotations from the (Old Testament) (the Septuagint).

It is important in this context to quote Helmut Koester's following statement: "While Marcion emphasized the irreconcilable contradictions between the written Gospel and the Jewish scripture, Justin linked the writings which he called "Memoirs of the Apostles" as lightly as possible to the law and the prophets. While Marcion revised the Gospel of Luke in an effort to eliminate all quotations and

references to the law and the prophets, Justin did not hesitate to revise the texts of Matthew and Luke on several occasions in order to establish an even closer verbal agreement between the prophecies of the Greek Bible and the record of their fulfillment in the text of the gospels."[123]

Moreover, for Justin, the gospels possess the authority of written records, although they are read in service of the church, they are not "Holy Scripture" like the Torah and the other old testament writings.

Justin never hold the "gospels" or the "Memoirs of the Apostles" as inspired writings. While he regularly quotes the law and the Prophet's as Holy Scripture.[124]

Marcion who came from Sinope in Pontus to Rome C. A.D. 140, to join the church emphasizes the irreconcilable contradictions between the written Gospel and Jewish Scripture.

The discrepancies and differences between the Jewish and Christian Scriptures or on the one hand; and between the four gospels on the other, shall be treated in detail elsewhere.[125]

The background to Ibn Hazm's concept of *Tahrif*

Ibn Hazm's conception of *Tahrif* is drawn from the authority of the Qur'an. Before his views on this matter are discussed in detail some reference should be made to Peter the Venerable (c. 490-551 A.H. = 1096-1156 A.C.) who, in the process of his project to study Islam from original sources, provided a Christian angle on the issue of *Tahrif*. Peter, while admitting that the persecution of the Christians by the Romans had involved the destruction of sacred books[126] argued that the extensive establishment of Christianity ensured that the gospels and the writings of the Apostles survived intact. If they were

destroyed in one place, they were saved in another. If, he argues, the texts were not lost, there is no reason to suppose that they were falsified either. He quotes a French proverb to support his point "What two know, everybody knows."(127) Furthermore he insists that as the Qur'an contains material that is also in the gospels, to condemn the gospels as false is tantamount to admitting that the Qur'an itself is doubtful. Peter's argument is one that fails to discriminate between the Muslim conception of the true *Injil* - the uncorrupted scripture to which the Qur'an refers - and the corrupted Gospel in the possession of Christians. His attitude to *Tahrif* is the basis of his argument, and as Kuitzeck comments "Peter was ill-informed on this matter."(128) He maintained that the Qur'an contained no references to the corruption of the Bible although there are many precise and unambiguous references on this subject which will be considered in more detail later.

Peter's argument that the extent of Christianity, which he describes as existing in Persia, Ethiopia and India safeguarded the original texts is not a strong one, "the number of Christians at the close of the 1st century is very uncertain..."(129)

Tertullian's claim that "all your citizens have become Christians" has been described as "obviously rhetorical exaggeration."(130) Christianity was not introduced into Ethiopia until the fourth century.(131) The church had certainly existed in India since the fourth century although the claim that Thomas the Apostle evangelized India cannot be regarded as certain.(132) Peter's assertion, it should be clear, does not answer the possibility that corruption took place at an early date in the history of Christianity. The Qur'an is not specific concerning the date at which the *Injil* suffered *Tahrif*.

The Qur'anic verses ignored by Peter the Venerable which refer to the corruption of Jewish and Christian scriptures fall into two

categories. Firstly, there are passages which discuss the corruption of the Torah and state that the Jews are responsible for this.[133] Although the culpability of the Jews could be applied equally to the Christians who have adopted the Torah as the sacred foundation of the New Testament, giving, however, a different interpretation to it, the concern of this book at this point is with the second category of verses. These refer to the Jews and Christians under the title 'People of the Book' and charge them with corruption of their scriptures.

Ibn Hazm refers to 3:71 in this context,[134] but sets the verse among others quoted from the Qur'an, without comment. At-Tabari, however, applying himself to the same verse: ﴿*People of the Book! Why do you confound the truth with vanity, and conceal the truth and that wittingly?*﴾ comments that by this God means the people of the Torah and *Injil*, and asks them why they mix truth with vanity, and hide the foretelling of Muhammad when they found it written in their Torah and *Injil*. He adds that the verse is to be understood as a statement from God that the People of the Book intentionally disbelieved in Muhammad and concealed what they all knew of the prophecy about him in those books.[135] If this is added to all the other Qur'anic passages insisting that Muhammad was prophesied in the Jewish and Christian scriptures,[136] and compared with the fact pointed out by Ibn Hazm - that both peoples agreed that there is no mention of Muhammad in their books,[137] it must be concluded that the Christians and Jews corrupted those parts referring to Muhammad.

It is noticeable that verses dealing with the corruption of the *Injil* are scanty in comparison with those devoted to the corruption of the Torah - but it would be an error to imagine that the Qur'an makes no reference at all to the corruption of the four gospels. In my view this is the consequence of the Jewish assertion that their Torah is that given

to Moses by God, and their insistence that it contains no corruption of any kind, as Ibn Hazm described. The Christians, however, have considered their Gospel to be in the form of four books, a view which makes the possibility of corruption so likely that it is not necessary for the Qur'an to be so emphatic - as Ibn Taymiyah commented, distortion in the Christian gospels is more obvious and clear than in the Jewish Torah. Similarly, the Christian rejection of the idea of a single genuine Gospel of Jesus is so firm that the Qur'an devotes a number of references to asserting its existence, as mentioned above. Thus the Qur'anic verses, in number and emphasis, are designed to match the strength of its opponents.

Qur'an scholars are in agreement concerning the presence of corruption in the gospels, but there are a variety of views on the precise form that the corruption takes - some consider it to be located in the text itself, others regard it as being a matter of exegesis. Ibn Hazm's primary loyalty is to the first group, although he ventures into criticism of Christian exegesis when it proves useful for his arguments, and this may be a matter of detailed criticism of an individual exegete, or objections to the underlying Christian ethos of basing their scriptures on the Torah.

An investigation of the etymology of *Tahrif*:

An investigation of the etymology of *Tahrif* (corruption) constitutes a useful starting point for contextualizing Ibn Hazm's position on the subject of the Christian gospels. The original meaning of the word is "to lean from the pen in a certain direction" or "to twist words to correspond to one's own desire."(138) The Andalusian interpreter Ibn `Atiyya stated that *Tahrif* means "to change or transfer something from its original character to another" and that Ibn `Abbas

held that the Jewish (and possibly the Christian, by implication) corruption and change was to be found in exegesis, the letter of the Torah surviving intact, although a second school of scholars maintained that the letters themselves had been changed on the basis that although the Jews had been asked to safeguard the Torah, unlike the Qur'an it was not safeguarded by God Himself.(139)

As has been mentioned, al-Bukhari's statement concerning Ibn `Abbas and quoted by Ibn Hazm affirms, however, that the *Tahrif* was in the text of the Torah. Furthermore at-Tabari ascribed to Ibn `Abbas a comment on 3:78, that the Jews had added to the book of God that which God had not revealed.(140) The great commentator *Mujahid* stated that Jews and Christians denied Muhammad's prophethood - even though it is stated in the Torah and the Gospel - but it is not clear whether he regards their denial as a matter of exegesis or as prompted by a corrupt text.(141) The Caliph al-Mahdi clearly told his critic, the patriarch Timothy, that the Bible had contained many prophecies about Muhammad but the People of the Book had corrupted their texts and they had removed the prophecies.(142) Al-Mahdi asked Timothy why the gospels were different from one another and were contradictory, and like his successor, Ibn Hazm touched on the point that they were written by four different authors.(143) Timothy's reply has been mentioned elsewhere in this book.(144)

Aj-Jahiz argues that both Christian transmission and exegesis are corrupt: "We are certain that he (Jesus) came with none except pure unity and monotheism - that is supported by reason - but not the Trinity. We know that the Christians are in error both on the side of transmission, and on the side of exegesis."(145)

Al-Hasan ibn Ayyub (c. 377 A. H. = 987 A.C.) has been described by Monsignor Ignazio de Matteo as not denying "the genuineness and

authenticity of the gospels" but simply criticizing the Christian understanding of them.[146] This is a mistaken interpretation; Ibn Ayyub certainly does refer to Christian assertions of Christ's divinity and references to the Christian assertion of Jesus' Lordship, commenting "we have described them according to your understanding of them, we accepted your saying (of them)", but further on he makes it clear that such acceptance is for arguments sake. He is unambiguous in stating his belief in the material corruption of the gospels "... we are in no doubt that the People of the Book have altered some of their words".[147] Al-Biruni (d. 440 A. H. = 1048 A. C.), a contemporary of Ibn Hazm, concerned himself with the dating of Biblical events especially in the context of the Old Testament. He, too, asserted that the scriptures had been misunderstood by Christians, and that material corruption of the genuine text had taken place.[148]

Ar-Razi, in his commentary offered various explanations of how corruption in the Torah could have taken place, but concluded that although the Qur'anic verses might refer to textual change it was preferable to consider it as a matter of exegesis. His view - that the Torah had been transmitted through an unbroken chain of authorities[149] - is contrary to common Muslim belief and to the argument put forward in *Al-Faisal.*

Wahb ibn Munabbih stated that the Torah and *Injil*, as they were sent down by God, have not suffered change in the letter, but only through the *Tahrif* in exegesis, and in those books which Jews and Christians have written themselves but which, they claim, have come from God. The actual books of God, however, are safeguarded against change. Commenting on Wahb, Ibn Kathir argues that if he were referring to the texts in the hands of Jews and Christians there could be no doubt that corruption had found its way into the texts. He

strengthened his arguments by referring to the translation into Arabic which bore witness to many errors, additions and general confusions in the understanding of many, if not all, Jews and Christians. Ibn Kathir concluded that Wahb is right, however, if he is stating that the revealed books of God, the originals, have been preserved against corruption.(150)

Ash-Shahrastani remarked that *Tahrif* means "changing the written word to an alternative to give it a corrupted meaning."(151)

It should be clear from the above that there is a considerable range of opinion on the issue of corruption. Ibn Taymiyah summarizes the broad outline of this as a general consensus that corruption in interpretation can and does take place. There is no quarrel between Jews, Christians and Muslims on this matter; dispute, however, arises when the focus turns to the texts themselves. Ibn Taymiyah sums up the Muslim view as a general acceptance that *Tahrif* does indeed apply to parts of the Christian gospels, although its precise extent may be debated among scholars.(152) The shortage of specific Qur'anic information on this is insignificant when compared to the total view of the book in refuting the Crucifixion, Resurrection and the Ascension as depicted by Christians. Such a refutation implicitly states that considerable portions of the extant gospels are human invention, and consequently corrupt. He regarded the Crucifixion and other events as human insertions in the gospels.(153)

Ibn Taymiyah presents an extremely lucid and thorough account of alleged corruption in the Gospel, and his arguments clarify Ibn Hazm's point of view by comparison and contrast.

Ibn Taymiyah begins by stating the facts; that there are four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Christians agree that Mark did not see Jesus, and that the gospels were written after Jesus'

death. The same author then points out that none of the evangelists described the gospels as the words of God. After these prefatory remarks the argument shifts into a cogent comparison between Christianity and Islam on the basis of their respective sacred books.

Initially the argument takes the form of an extended analogy between the gospels and the *Hadith*. Since the evangelists neither claim to have collected Jesus' sayings in toto, nor to have transcribed the speech of God, their productions are parallel to the books of *Hadith* which are not infallible, as the Qur'an is. Like the *Hadith* Ibn Taymiyah regards the gospels as sound in the main, and therefore worthy of observance. Nevertheless they contain what is essentially a mixture of Divine and human material. Parts of them are God's sayings, and sections of them contain the words of the prophet revealed to Him by God. Ibn Taymiyah thus acknowledges that parts of the Gospel were revealed to Jesus, but that these are juxtaposed with Jesus' sayings and accounts of his deeds as a prophet.

Having established a basis of material from mixed sources in the gospels, he clearly paves the way for the possibility of corruption. He treats the next section of his argument in a pattern of contrasts between Muslim attitudes to preserving sacred texts and their Christian counterparts. Firstly he considers, and stresses most emphatically, the importance of memorizing the Qur'an and *Hadith* as a security measure for the preservation of the texts. This, for him, would ensure the survival of the sacred books even if all known texts were destroyed. By comparison, the People of the Book have no tradition of exactly memorizing their texts,[154] and thus would be unable to reproduce them if they were destroyed.

Although Ibn Taymiyah acknowledges that some People of the Book learn parts of their texts by heart, these people, he comments,

are not trustworthy. The breaking of the chain of prophets, as in Judaism, leads to corruption. Corruption as he defines it, can be either in the text or in its explication.

The author of *Al-Jawab* then presses his point by comparing the Muslim *Isnad*, system of ascription, with its lack in the methodology of the People of the Book. Lacking such a system which provides a rationale for meticulous sifting and accuracy, it is not possible that Christians are able to protect their gospels.

He then concentrates his argument specifically on the Christian gospels themselves, and doubts the precision with which scattered disciples could recount events in the past. He focuses on the passion narrative, detailing inconsistencies between the accounts. If it is possible for there to be uncertainty about this event it is logical to assume that the Gospel accounts of Jesus' sayings are also in doubt. Ibn Taymiyah does not, however, accuse the known disciples of lying, and in this he differs from his more fiery predecessor, Ibn Hazm. He does not ascribe blame to the disciples, but regards them as prone to error through circumstances. Their errors do not, in his view, undermine Jesus' message.

Problems of corruption and disagreement among Christians are demonstrated in Christian sectarianism, most of which clusters round uncertainties as to the exact meaning of the Incarnation.

Ibn Taymiyah refers to various heresies and disputes about the union of Divine and human in the person of Jesus.

The lack of stability - which he sees in the Christian faith - is further witnessed by the fact that the bulk of their observances were invested after the time of the disciples.

Finally he moves to consider the problem of the texts themselves in linguistic terms. Jesus spoke Hebrew or Aramaic, the language in which the gospels were first written. Translation into several languages inevitably led to a process of error and corruption.(155) Ibn Taymiyah's perceptive scholarship would be impressive in isolation, but has been given further validity by modern writers who freely admit the difficulties arising from transmission and translation.

Ibn Taymiyah raises a very important point here about the negative effect of the translation on the text. To elaborate on, and illustrate this point reference should be made to George Lamsa who closely examined the history of the king James version of the Bible, says in the introduction to his own translation of the Bible: "When the king James translation was madė, western scholars had no access to the East as we have today. In the 16th century, A.D., the Turkish empire had extended its borders as far as Vienna ... The scriptures in Aramaic were unknown in Europe. The only resource scholars had was to Latin and to a few portions of Greek manuscripts... It is a miracle that the king James, translators were able to produce such a remarkable translation from sources available in this dark period of European history. Even fifty years ago, the knowledge of Western scholars relative to the Eastern Scriptures in Aramaic, and the Christian Church in the East was conjectural. Moreover, these scholars knew very little of the eastern customs and manners in which the Biblical literature was nurtured."(156)

Due to the elements mentioned in the above quotation, some real problems arose in the translation of the biblical text. Johannes Lehmann provides a clear example to show the lack of understanding that can face the translator who tries to translate from culturally different languages. He refers to John 2:1:

> "On the third day there was a wedding at Canna in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there."

He then comments; "What is this third day? The third day after what? Some translators have omitted the reference to the day at all, others have tried to make it the third day after the wedding. But there is a very simple explanation. Except for the Sabbath, Jewish days do not have names. They are numbered from the Sabbath. Thus the third day is our Tuesday."(157)

In this example the effect of the translation may seem insignificant. But in some cases the whole meaning of the passage has been changed, the following sharp example is quoted by Lamsa:

In the king James version, we read in numbers 25:4;

> "And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the Sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel.'"

The Aramaic reads:

> "And the Lord Said unto Moses, Take all the chiefs of the people and expose them before the Lord in the daylight that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from the Children of Israel."(158)

According to the first passage the Prophet Moses was commanded to kill people and take all their heads and hang them up.

While the second passage tells that God commanded Moses just to expose the corruption of the chief commands before people. The difference is thus dramatic.

These examples can be of course multiplied, but it would be suffice to know that the translation has badly affected the Biblical texts, and thus added another element of corruption to it.

Moffatt, for example, pointed out that the possibility of interpolations cannot be ruled out, "even where the extant text does not suggest any break"(159) Like B. H. Streeter,(160) he argues that the desire to harmonize diverse texts was the foundation of significant changes, and furthermore suggests that copyists sometimes played virtually an editorial role in approaching their material.(161)

Ibn Kammuna, writing in the thirteenth century, pointed out that adaptation of the prophetic books to Christian use necessarily involved corruption. "Many of the prophetic texts were distorted by the Christians in the process of translation from Hebrew into Greek and Syriac."(162) Such distortions may have been the result "of intent or negligence". M. Dibelius gives the following remarks: "These Christians believed themselves to be more faithful to their Master when they explained His sayings by expanding them, and then followed them with understanding, than if they had abhorred any addition and passed on the original form of His words."(163)

In the view of the above passage the Christians mixed their own expressions with the sayings of Jesus and they considered this action to be more faithful to their Master.

As an example of addition to the scriptures William Barclay quotes Mark 2:15-17: and comments on the text as follows: "This line of thought holds that the actual saying of Jesus ends with the words: 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick'. And that then the community added the interpretation: 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners'; for this was the very principle on which the missionary work of the Christian Church was based. In

other words the community has, as it were, put into the mouth of Jesus a general principle which is the expansion and the interpretation of a particular saying."[164]

Furthermore the same writer gives the following remarks on Mark 3:31-35: "This line of thought holds that Jesus' actual words, and with, 'Here are my mother and my brothers', and that then from this the community extracted a quite general principle: 'Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother'. The community has extracted from a particular word of Jesus on a particular occasion a word for all time."[165]

R. Bultman went very far in regarding the passage about the Sabbath in Mark 2:23-27 as merely a production of the church and therefore not authentic history. In his view, it was formulated to justify through the words of Jesus the church's use of the Sabbath. This is on the ground that Jesus was not questioned about his own behavior, but about his disciples' behavior.

The Biblical critics argue about the question of whether or not chapter 21 in John was written by the author of 1-20 or by another person.[166]

Moreover textual alteration is admitted by the analytical scholars in the New Testament, for example Robert Grant says: "The ending of the Gospel of Mark (16:9-20) is no part of what its author originally wrote: (a) Justin alluded to it and Irenaeus quoted from it; it is included in some important uncial manuscripts, mostly 'Western'. (b) On the other hand, it is absent from the writings of Clement, Origen and Eusebius, and is omitted in Codex Vaticanus and Codes Sinaiticus, as well as in the older Latin and Syriac versions; the Freer manuscript contains a different ending entirely. (c) Therefore, though it was undoubtedly added at an early date, it is not authentic."[167]

The same author goes on to say: "The story about a woman 'Taken in adultery' and forgiven by Jesus does not belong to the Gospel of John."

(a) It occurs in the Byzantine text of the Gospel, usually as John 7:53-8:11 but sometimes after John 7:36 or 21:24 (in a small group of manuscripts it is found after Luke 21:38).

(b) No manuscript before the end of the fourth century contains it, no Church Father, in the same period, refers to it.

(c) Therefore it is not authentic.

A more difficult problem occurs in Luke 22:19-20. All but a few manuscripts include these verses, which are close to what Paul relates about the Last Supper in I Corinthians 11.24-5.(168)

Ibn Taymiyah raised the question of the credibility of the Crucifixion, and points out that one might be led to ask for some positive guarantee for the soundness of the gospels conveyed by the disciples who, according to him, were confused about the Crucifixion and Resurrection.(169)

The above account illustrates the diversity of opinions held by Muslim scholars on the question of corruption. Matteo's gazetteer of the attitudes of Muslims to *Tahrif* has already been mentioned: he attempts to sum up his findings by arguing that the Qur'an implies that corruption is in the area of interpretation, and is not a question of material corruption: "the lie is not inside, but outside of the scriptures."(170) Furthermore he imposes a historical pattern on the scholars who dealt with corruption arguing that "the early traditionalists recognize the genuineness of the Biblical text"(171) while later writers were divided between a belief in exegetical and material

corruption. The Islamic writers mentioned above in this section should illustrate that a belief in the textual corruption of the scriptures can be traced back to early writers. Watt, like Matteo, argues that the Qur'an does not put forward any general view of textual corruption, although he admits that it alleges the concealment of scriptural passages. The accusation of *Tahrif* does not, he states, mean tampering with the written text.[(172)] Goldziher, in his study of Ibn Khaldun seems much closer to the facts, pointing out that "*Tahrif* in Muslim thought, since the encounter of Islam with Jews and Christians, meant the alteration of the Biblical text by later hands."[(173)]

It is now necessary to turn to the Christian understanding of the Gospel tradition and corruption in order to demonstrate how the Christians attempt to defend the gospels against the charge of *Tahrif.*

The Christian view of the Gospel Tradition

The Christian viewpoint of the authenticity of the Gospel Tradition should be considered. There is considerable diversity among Christian scholars when considering this matter, but without engaging in a lengthy discussion of the details of various hypotheses regarding transmission, some significant points will be raised here.

Behind the scholarly investigation of texts in existence, and texts which are assumed to have existed, lies the belief that the Gospel Tradition derives from eyewitness accounts of the life of Jesus: "Tradition is unanimous that the written Gospel was the substitute for the living voice."[(174)] Thus an oral tradition of eyewitness accounts is seen as the background of the current written gospels. This oral tradition itself is regarded as complex, drawing not only on eyewitness narrations, but also on those narrations shaped and adapted for preaching purposes; as Irenaeus indicates the object of the early

preachers and consequently of early tradition, was to proclaim: "Those good things which are ours from God."(175) The adaptation of eyewitness accounts for the purposes of evangelism must be seen in the light of the problems attending the process of translation. Translation from the original Aramaic into Greek was itself a piecemeal business, "No one ever sat down and translated the material as a whole."(176) Parts of the Gospel would be translated when it was required.(177) Furthermore each fragmented piece of translation would itself be influenced by local considerations; "subjected to certain influences through the church life or milieu where they were handed down or received their final written form."(178) Thus the character of the early oral tradition and of the beginnings of the written tradition were subject to a considerable variety of particular shaping influences. Streeter offers a thorough account of these in his study of the origins of the four gospels.(179)

In the Introduction of his book *The Earliest Record of Jesus*, Frank W. Beare says: "In any serious study of the gospels we have always to keep in mind that Jesus himself left nothing in writing, and that the earliest records of his career which have come down to us were not put into writing until about forty years after his death. All our knowledge of him is drawn from the deposit of a tradition which was transmitted for several decades by word of mouth. We are therefore obliged to raise the question of the relationship between the documents as we have them and the events and sayings which they report. For it must be realized that in a generation or more of oral transmission, sayings and stories do not remain unchanged. Once they have been committed to writing, they are to some degree stabilized as it were, though even at this stage, we have to observe that Luke and Matthew do not shrink from altering the Marcan record which they are both using..."(180)

It is commonly agreed among biblical scholars that the manuscripts even the oldest and most valuable ones have, like oral tradition, suffered adverse corruption and defects. They were not only unsafe in the hands of the scribes who used to ink the manuscripts over with the a tendency to alteration of meaning and contents but also those of them who annotated and interpolated manuscripts over the centuries have not been deciphered to this day. This is clearly admitted by the editor of the Code Vaticanus, managed by Vatican City in 1965.

Moreover the irregularities in terms of omissions and additions, are serious and rampant between Gospel and Gospel.(181)

All these instances of crystal clear evidence go to strengthen the Islamic Divine stance that present Jews and Christian scriptures are not from errors and interpretation and there stood in dire need the final Divine message rectify the short comings and the effect man-made doctrines on them.

One cannot resist the temptation to express wonder at the response of Jewish and Christian feel at home with their own scholars admission of corruption their scriptures. While on the contrary they tend to take Muslim scholars to task, when put the Qur'anic views which reveal the same verdict; bearing in mind that the Muslim pursue attitude reveal religion as the belief in the previous Divine books and prophets.

An insight into the early written gospels and attitudes towards them can be found in the fact that quotations from them given by the church Fathers differ from the current texts. Justin, for example, mentions several events for which there are no exact parallels in the four texts: he states that Jesus was born in a cave, and that a fire was kindled in Jordan at His baptism.(182) While it is possible to defend

Justin to some extent on the basis that he was quoting from memory and that tradition was fresh enough for him not to have regarded the written text as of paramount importance, such a defense cannot disentangle similar variations in the case of all the Apostolic Fathers, of whom it has been said: "None of them name the gospels or cite them with verbal exactness."[(183)] It is difficult to distinguish between oral and written sources in these cases; do these quotations "come from written texts that the authors had next to them or ... the memory of fragments of the oral tradition."[(184)] The whole question of accurate or inaccurate memory which is frequently raised in discussions of the Apostolic Fathers serves to contextualize Ibn Taymiyah's objection to the want of a tradition of accurate memorization in Christianity, as mentioned above. The difficulties inherent in the quotations of the early church Fathers indicate the likelihood of their mixing their own assertions and interpretations with the tradition received from eyewitness accounts.

There is little doubt that early written, as opposed to oral accounts have long since disappeared, and this would necessarily have involved the usual scribal errors of copying. Furthermore the Christian persecutions created a historical context in which manuscripts must inevitably have been destroyed, a point frequently made by Ibn Hazm and Muslim scholars in general.

The Christian defense against Corruption

Christian apologists firstly state that there are contradictory views of the scriptures in the Qur'an. Muhammad acknowledged, and praised them on some occasions, but attacked them on others,[(185)] he claimed to originate from the same source, but his teaching differed from that of the Torah and the gospels.

Ibn Hazm's Christian contemporaries raised the question of how Muslims could say that they believed in the Torah and the gospels, drawing on them to prove Muhammad's prophecy, while simultaneously saying that these books were corrupt. Ibn Hazm, in reply, states that Muslims believe in Moses and Jesus, and the Torah and *Injil*, and furthermore, true Muslims charge anyone who denies these with unbelief. However, Muslims believe that unbelievers among the sons of Israel had changed the Torah, and that unbelievers among Christians had corrupted the *Injil* by addition and omission; but that God saved some to be a testimony against the corrupters, and to judge them in the light of those parts of the Gospel that are sound.(186)

Ibn Hazm accepts parts of the four gospels as sound and in this context those Qur'anic verses to which his critics referred as evidence of the complete soundness of their scriptures should be mentioned with his comments. One particularly important verse which specifically concerns itself with both Christian and Jewish sacred books is 5:66: ﴿*Had they performed the Torah and the Gospel, and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would have eaten both what was above them, and what was beneath their feet*﴾.

Ibn Hazm comments that the truth of this is unquestionable but he seems to place a particular understanding on the word *Aqamu* which is not fully brought out in the translation "performed". As it appears in *Al-Faisal,* Ibn Hazm seems to regard this as signifying "observed in full" "set upright" - it is thus not merely an invocation to observe, but a request to set straight. He comments "there is no way for Christians to set their gospels upright" because the parts they have omitted have been taken away or have vanished, leaving them without a sure foundation. Only by believing in Muhammad can the Torah and *Injil* be set upright, and it would then be possible for Christians and Jews to

believe in what God had originally revealed in their gospels, whether or not that still survives. They will then recognize as false the corruptions in their scriptures which consist of those parts not revealed by God.[187]

Ibn Hazm's assessment of this verse is supported by a modern Qur'anic interpreter who argues that it neither gives Christians evidence of the soundness of their scriptures, nor proof that they have not suffered corruption - he adds that the meaning of the verse is a commandment to Jews and Christians to observe the real Torah and *Injil* which are implied in the Qur'an.[188]

Ibn Hazm then refers to a Qur'anic verse used by some of his critics as supposed evidence of the validity of the Christian gospels: ﴿ *So let the people of the Gospel judge according to what God has sent down therein.* ﴾[189] The author of *Al-Faisal* regards this as true. In the literal sense: in the Gospel God has, as the verse states, sent down His commandment to believe in Muhammad and to follow His Religion. However, Christians are unable to judge according to what was sent down in the Gospel from which they take their name "People of the Gospel", because the gospels in their possession are not that which was revealed by God.[190] In this passage Ibn Hazm explains that the description of the "People of the Gospel" given in this Qur'anic verse derives from the original, pure Gospel, not from the four texts known as the gospels by his contemporary Christians. This understanding of the verse in question finds support from other scholars, among whom Ibn Kathir can be numbered.

Ibn Kathir regards the commandment as specifically directed towards Jews and Christians before the time of Muhammad, and referring to God's Revelation as it appears in the Torah and the Gospel.[191]

After the time of Muhammad, however, the text to which Jews and Christians must turn is the Qur'an which abrogates every earlier book. This reading is supported by a certain Qur'anic *Qira'ah* (reading) "*Wa Liyahkum Ahl al-Injil*" which does not indicate the imperative form, and states: "We gave him (Jesus) the Gospel so that the People of the Gospel might observe what God revealed in it."(192) This refers to the genuine Gospel, and does not indicate the Gospel current during Muhammad's time.

It should be clear from the discussion above that Christians attempted to defend their texts from the charge of corruption by using the Qur'an itself as one aspect of their apology. Ibn Hazm's answer to such arguments has been indicated: however, there was another area of reference in this debate, and this consisted of the time at which the Christian texts might have undergone corruption.

An illustration of the Christian point of view can be found in the work of `Ammar al-Basri, known only through two controversial books. Al-Basri disputes the possibility that the scriptures could have suffered change after the period during which they were widely circulated.(193) The same question was raised by Ibn Hazm who dated the time at which the gospels were corrupted as predating the time at which they were written down, after which anyone making textual changes would have been immediately exposed - as has been discussed above.(194) Ar-Razi, too, addressed himself to the same problem, and although he was inclined to think that corruption was a matter of exegesis which had misrepresented the word of God, he was prepared to countenance the possibility that a group of people had connived to distort the Gospel at an early date, and had subsequently introduced the text to an audience who had accepted it out of ignorance.(195) Ibn Taymiyah, who made use of Ibn Hazm's arguments

on this issue, is quite explicit in stating that corruption could not have taken place after the text of the scripture had been circulated in many languages all over the globe;[196] it is impossible in his view, that even secular texts could be changed after having been widely circulated. The Torah and gospels, then, must have been distorted when they were small in number and narrow in circulation. The actual texts current in his day bore marks of an early, rather than a late corruption.[197]

Following the Muslim belief ar-Razi stated that the Jewish and Christian books have been corrupted as it has been mentioned in the context of our answer to Hava Lazarus.

The author of *Al-Faisal* considered the problem of the existence of several Qur'anic readings but it is necessary to outline the Christian position taken up against Ibn Hazm on this matter in order to indicate the character of this attack which is ultimately directed at the Qur'an itself. The Christian apologists argued that differences in the form of the Qur'anic words discoverable in the gospels were not distortion, but alternative readings, thus implying that there was no distinction in authoritativeness between the Qur'an itself and the gospels.

Ibn Hazm's Christian critics sought flaws in the Islamic ascription or *Isnad*. They said that there were variant readings of the Qur'an, in particular they cited `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud's (d. 33 A.H. = 653 A.C.) copy of the Qur'an as different from the current one. Secondly, they argued that some of the learned scholars in Islam stated that `Uthman cut out many correct readings, and gathered Muslims around one of the seven readings through which the Qur'an was revealed. Thirdly, Christians argued that the Rawafid alleged that differences were perpetrated by Muhammad's Companions, as has been discussed in detail in the second chapter. The author of *Al-Faisal* answers his critics as follows. Firstly, he argues that the addition or omission of

letters does not constitute variant readings of the Qur'an; the significant factor is that the readings were passed down through an uninterrupted chain of authorities. Thus all seven readings of the Qur'an are correct, because they are each the word as revealed to Muhammad. Limited in number to seven, omission and addition cannot alter the accuracy and exactness of the seven readings. Ibn Hazm is at pains to defend Islam from the charge that some of Muhammad's Companions and followers read the Qur'an in an idiosyncratic way which is not followed by other Muslims who nevertheless reverence these figures, and that this constitutes a weakness in *Isnad.* He comments that while Muslims respect and revere these figures, they do not regard them as beyond illusion and error, or as guides to be followed blindly. What they transmitted of Muhammad's words as witnesses who saw and heard him is acceptable, but it is not claimed that they were infallible; when they made pronouncements on the basis of personal opinion or speculation they offer readings which derive from the narrator's own views. The implication here is that these readings are not validated by *Ijma`* or consensus of opinions; and elsewhere Ibn Hazm mentions that the text could not be accepted unless all of Muhammad's Companions agreed upon it.[198] He complains here that Christians fail to sift their authorities in this fashion.

Moving to the specific question of Ibn Mas`ud's script being different, the author of *Al-Faisal* totally rejects this, arguing that it is one of the attested seven readings of the word as revealed to Muhammad.

The argument that `Uthman suppressed correct readings for the sake of unity is also dismissed. Ibn Hazm argues that in practical terms it would not have been possible for `Uthman to have done this, considering the number of extant readings in his day, and the wide

circulation of texts throughout the Islamic world. Furthermore, the choice of one reading was simply to identify a touchstone copy for reference purposes if anyone attempted to make changes to the text.

On the subject of Rawafid, he unambiguously rejects their authority, since in his view they are not Muslims, but a sect which, as has already been mentioned in the context of the Qur'an, arose 25 years after Muhammad's death, and which conspired against Islam. He compares this sect to Jews and Christians who corrupted their texts, and he describes the Rawafid as telling untruths about `Ali.[(199)]

Sweetman comments on one particular aspect of Ibn Hazm's defense, that is his point that the Companions were not free from error.

Sweetman describes this as: "a serious admission because it is by the Companions that Islam has the Qur'an."[(200)] On this point Sweetman fails to grasp the essential thrust of Ibn Hazm's argument, which is that the Companions are not infallible as individuals, but their consensus of opinion is infallible. This is made perfectly clear in the text of *Al-Faisal*, in a section which is not quoted by Sweetman. "Those readings to which the Christians refer are dependent only on (*Mawquf*) the Companion or follower."[(201)] This statement shows that Ibn Hazm's attack was quite specifically directed at the individuality of the figures; this does not exclude the possibility of infallibility when the individual Companion played a role in consensus.

Sweetman's commentary on Ibn Hazm's attitude to the Companions makes precisely the same points made against the author by his contemporary Maliki opponents. He was accused of having represented Muhammad's Companions as inventing new aspects of the faith after the Prophet's death. Ibn Hazm defended himself stoutly,

arguing that he had never attacked the Companions, from whom Muslims received their faith and in whose footsteps he followed. He complained that the Malikiyya blindly followed the leader of their own school of thought, while Muslims should properly recognize that their faith was transmitted by the *Sahaba*, given the fulfillment of the uninterrupted chain of authorities traceable to the Prophet himself. The *Sahaba*, the genuine narrators, their trustworthy followers, and the traditionalists must be seen as the agents who perpetuate Islam.(202)

The whereabouts of the original Gospel

Collecting the points made by Ibn Hazm in this context, his view can be stated as follows. The Gospel was partly destroyed, a destruction that took place with God's permission. The author of *Al-Faisal* differs from Ibn Taymiyah in that he does not argue for the existence of a sound version during Muhammad's lifetime, but traces the partial destruction of the *Injil* to the dispersal of the Apostles after Jesus' death.

Ibn Hazm's text implies that he refers to a particular written book. The author of *Al-Faisal* does not exclude the possibility that fragments of the original might have survived, either in written form or in the memories of Jesus' followers.

Abu al-Fadl al-Maliki carried the above statement further when he used the following chapter heading in *Al-Muntakhab*, Section One "On What Part of the Gospel was Protected from Corruption". Ibn Taymiyah is in agreement with the above statement, but added the following points: Christians did not distort all the versions of the Gospel. They only did so with some of them, but not with every copy. If he is correct he remarks that the Qur'an acknowledges the correct version, and attacks the corrupted one; but Ibn Taymiyah is unable to present the sound Gospel.

The same author is here indirectly attempting to resolve the problem which Christians have raised, namely that in places the Qur'an calls Christians to observe their Gospel, while elsewhere it describes their Gospel as corrupted. Ibn Taymiyah, by positing the existence of an uncorrupted version of the Gospel as well as corrupted versions, suggests that the Qur'an asks Christians to observe the former and reject the latter. Such a solution is attractive at first sight, but cannot withstand close examination. If a sound version of the Gospel existed during the lifetime of Muhammad why is there no trace of it in early Islamic writing, and why was it not preserved by Muslims? Muhammad would have safeguarded such a heavenly Book if it had existed, since it contained the prophecy of his own coming; furthermore, he would not have permitted the four corrupt gospels to have superseded the uncorrupted original.(203)

If Ibn Taymiyah cannot resolve the problem, a palatable explanation is offered by Ibn Hazm and several other Muslim scholars. The *Injil* was indeed partly destroyed, but also partly preserved in the four current gospels. Muhammad was able to distinguish between the false and the genuine by Revelation, not by human means. Thus it can be said that whenever the Qur'an praises the Gospel it refers to those parts of the genuine *Injil* incorporated into the present gospels. The Qur'an charges the People of the Book with 'intentional distortion of the scriptures',(204) and this would indicate that Christians and Jews are fully aware of which parts of their writings are genuine and which are human additions and distortions. Consequently when the Qur'an calls them to observe their scriptures it refers to the observation of the genuine parts of their scriptures, parts which they are able to identify. Muslims would say in general that the true sayings of Jesus can be distinguished from the rest of the four gospels in two ways: firstly, as the famous contemporary Muslim

scholar, S. Abul A`la Maududi suggests, when certain formulas are used to introduce the words of Jesus: "Thus it is obvious that the first four gospels are not the *Injil*, the discourses and sayings of Jesus, but they contain it. We have no means of recognizing them from the works of the authors except this: whenever the authors say, "Jesus said so, or taught so and so", there the *Injil* begins and when they resume the narration, there it ends."(205)

According to the same author, if such portions are compiled and compared with the Qur'an, no serious differences between the two will be discovered; trivial differences can easily be overcome by unbiased thinking.(206)

The second possible way of identifying the true *Injil* is, as M. H. `Abd al-`Aziz suggests, a question of comparing the accounts of the evangelists. If and when they agree, this could be said to constitute the actual sayings and teachings of Jesus. When disagreement occurs, the text is their own writing.(207)

These two methods of approaching the gospels exclude a good deal of material, but both diverge from Ibn Hazm's view and constitute a serious problem. The first method is not pursued by the author of *Al-Faisal*, who discounts several passages introduced with the suggested formulae. The most obvious difficulty with the second method is that it necessitates a partial acceptance at least, of the Crucifixion which would debilitate not only Ibn Hazm's argument, but also the overall Muslim position.

Now we are in a position to say that differences between the Muslim and Christian understanding of the revealed word of God - the former locating Revelation in their sacred text, the latter in the person of Jesus - have determined the character of the Christian-Muslim debate concerning the gospels. The Muslim scholars and Ibn Hazm in

particular employed the methods used to determine the authenticity of Islamic sacred texts, Ibn Hazm describes the process of the corruption of the four gospels in the light of the history of the early church, demonstrating the possibility of weak links in the chain of transmission.

The methodology he uses to find evidence of corruption ranges from the presence of Christian sectarianism, which he ascribes to the loss of the full *Injil* to a nice comparison of the textual details of the four gospels. Our arguments are firmly based on detailed study of the Christian texts both evangelical and ecclesiastical, the Christian answer to the Muslim view often taking the form of counter-attack, as has been demonstrated through out.

Conclusion

In this book we have studied the gospels in the Qur'an and also as understood by Christians in a comparative and analytical approach.

The gospels in the New Testament collection are presented on the basis of Christian doctrines and tradition.

The Qur'an declares Jesus to be a great prophet of God who was aided and enabled to guide His people on earth and was given a single 'Gospel' by God to teach to the people. This Gospel was lost and does not survive except in part in the four gospels. While Muslims believe in Jesus as a prophet with a Divine book, Christians believe that Jesus is the Divine Son of God and was himself the Revelation of God on earth, not only the bearer of Revelation. This is utterly rejected by Islam. Many places in the New Testament refer to Jesus as a prophet, as do the Nag Hammadi documents. He was also called a "Son of Man", "Savior" and so on. The Gospel in which Muslims believe is also referred to in the New Testament and in the sayings of Jesus. Jesus himself declared that what he delivered to people was God's message in God's words. He did not declare himself to be God or invite any one to worship him. Rather, he prostrated himself before God, the Creator. In times of weakness and despair he did not turn to himself but to God. He never claimed to have created anybody or anything. Muslims believe in the virgin birth as part of their religion, but virgin birth does not involve any input from God. Virgin birth is a sign of God's might and ability to do anything He wishes. The Qur'an

always brings to notice, when referring to the immaculate birth, to the creation of Adam from nothing out of dust, and to Zachariah and John. Zachariah was an old man, his wife was also old and barren, yet God gave them a child when they despaired and thought it impossible. Muslims believe that Jesus suffered to save people from the danger of eternal punishment and damnation, and that he was persecuted by the religious authority of his time, and was even taken to be crucified, but that God saved him and took him up to His presence. Thus Muslims do not believe in the crucifixion and the subsequent events such as atonement and resurrection of Jesus. Muslims believe in the many miracles worked by Jesus, such as giving life to the dead, curing the leper, giving sight to the blind but they regard them as signs and Divine support of his prophethood.

In the history of Christianity and Judaism many prophets of God have worked miracles of this kind. This does not undermine the real message of Jesus. To forgive people and give them salvation does not need God to come to earth or He becomes one of the creatures. God managed the whole world both before Jesus and after him, and it should be clear that God is above time, space and material.

The sayings of Jesus are scattered in the four gospels and of course in the many other gospels which the church rejected, and Jesus' sayings can benefit humanity, and provide a means of bringing Christianity and Islam closer to each other so that Christians and Muslims may understand each other.

As a Muslim scholar I commit myself to my scholarship and true sense of academic responsibility. I hope that in placing this book before the readers it will serve as a means to bring peace to our following words.

We all live in one big house each should look after the room in which he lives - be a good neighbor not an enemy next door.

Endnotes

Preface:

1- A. A. B. Philips, *The True Religion of God*, p. 5.

Chapter 1:

1- For example compare with Genesis 1:27) See J.W. Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology*, vol. 2, p. 91.

2- B. Kateregga and D. Shenk, *Islam and Christianity*, first published Kenya, Uzima Press Ltd., 1980, p. 47.

3- See M. Abu Laylah, *Christianity from the Islamic Point of View*, Ph.D. Thesis pp. 279 f.

4- See the thesis pp. 279 f.

5- *Ibid.* 281.

6- B. Kateregga and D. Shenk, *Islam and Christianity*, first published Kenya, Uzima Press Ltd., 1980, p 127.

7- *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 66.

8- *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 66.

Chapter 2:

1- See Ibn Kathir, *Mukhtasar Tafsir*, vol.1, pp. 128 ff, and vol. 2. pp.556 f and vol. 3, pp. 272 f.

2- See al-Firuzabadi, *Al-Qamus Al-Muhit*, (Misr, al-Babi al-Halabi 1371 A. H. 1952 A. C.) second edition vol. 4, pp. 226 f, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan Al-`Arab* (Beirut, Dar Sadir 1410 A. H. 1990 A. C.) pp.166 f, and al-Raghib al-Isfahani, *Mufradat Alfaz Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Safwan Adnan Dawudi (Beirut, Dar al-Qalam 1412 A. H. - 1992 A. C.) p. 323.

3- Ibn Kathir, *Mukhtasar Tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 134.

4- Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Bab Al-Anbiya`.

5- See Qur'an 87:19, 4:163, 3:3, 5:43, 2:23, 3:3-4. also al-Bukhari, *Kitab al-Anbiya' and Fada'il al-Sahaba.*

6- See Qur'an 2:132-133; 27:44; 5:111.

7- See M. Abu Laylah, *In Pursuit of Virtue*, (London, TaHa Publishers Ltd., 1990).

8- Ibn Kathir, *Mukhtasar Tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 231.

9- Altaf Gauharn ed., *The Challenge of Islam*, (London. Islam Council of Europe, 1978) pp. xxvii ff.

10- *Ibid.*

11- See M. Abu Laylah, *Inter-Faith Dialogue and Muslim Approach.* (forthcoming).

12- The *hadith* is reported by Imam Ahmad and at-Tirmidhi, see also Ibn Kathir, *Mukhtasar Tafsir*, vol. 3, p. 100.

13- See *As-Sahihin.*

14- See Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, translated by A. Guillanume. (Oxford University Press, 1978), pp.79-81.

15- *Ibid*, pp.73, 83, 99.

16- See Qur'an 2:89 and Ibn Kathir, *Mukhtasar Tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 88.

17- Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, translated by A. Guillaume, pp. 240 f.

18- Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, translated by A. Guillaume, pp. 240 f.

19- Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West*, (Oxford, One World Publications, 997). p. 74.

20- See Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, pp. 219 ff, and Ibn Qayyiam al-Jawziyya, *Hidayat al-Hayara*, Beirut, Maktabat al-Haya, 1400-1980), pp. 176 f, see M. Perlmman *Another Ka`b al-Ahbar Story* J. Q. R, 1955: pp. 48-58. Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, (Routledge and Kagan Paul, London, 1981), pp. 96 and Hava Lazarus, *Intertwined Worlds*, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1992) pp. 24.

21- A. Mingana, *The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph al-Mahdi*, Cambridge, Heffer and Sons Ltd. 1928.

22- See M. Abu Laylah, *In pursuit of Virtue*, pp. 84 ff.

23- See Brown Etvate, *The Jerome Bible Commentary*, (1986) vol. II, p. 111.

24- James Hastings, (Edinburgh, T&T. Clark, 1906) vol.1, pp. 860 f.

25- *Ibid.*

26- Abu Laylah, *Christianity from Muslim Point of View.*

27- See the Gospel of Barnabas, (Cairo, Dar al-Manar,) p. 96.

28- Vol.1, p. 82.

29- See *Ifham al-Yahud*, p. 50.

30- *Ibid.* see also, Ibn Taymiyah, *Al-Jawab As-Sahih*, vol. 3, pp. 275 ff.

31- See *Izhar al-Haqq*, pp. 327 ff. and Ahmad Didat's booklet on Christianity.

32- See *Muhammad in the Bible*, (Sarawak, Angkalan Nahdtiatul Islam Beratu) pp.156 f. and M. Cook.

33- Patricia Crone and M. Cook. Hagarism (London, 1985) p. 8.

34- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, (Cairo, Subayh, 1964), vol. 1, p. 78.

35- *Sirat Rasul Allah*, p.103.

36- See Qur'an, 3:58; 12:102; 16:44, 38:87; 20:3: 88;21.

Chapter 3:

1- See Qur'an, 17:88.

2- This *hadith* is reported by Abu Musa al-Ash`ari and unanimously recorded by the *Muhaddthin*, the Muslim traditionalists.

3- The *hadith* is reported by `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud and is unanimously accepted by all Muslim authorities. For further reading on this point see al-Ghazali, *Ihya' `Ulum ad-Din*, (Beirut, Dar al-Kitab al-`Arabi, n. d.) vol. 3, pp. III ff, Ibn Taymiyah, *Manjm'at Ar-Rasail Wal Masa'il*, ed. by Rashid Rida, (Cairo, Lajnat al-Turath al-'Arabi, n. d.) vol. 3, pp I8 ff and Muhammad Abu Laylah, *Al-Qur'an Al-Karim Dustur Al-Muslimin*, Al-Muslimun weakly newspaper, (London I 406 A. H, I986) vol. 2, number 71. p. 8.

4- See Arthur J Arberry's *Introduction to the Koran Interpreted* (Lond. Oxford University Press, 1969), P.X: also Muhammad Salih al-Bindaq, *Al-Qur'an Wa Al-Mustashriqun*, (Beirut), p. 106.

5- See Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, pp. 23 ff, also R. Pfeiffer, Introduction pp. 68 ff and 12o ff, Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, (London Eyre and Spottiswood, 1939), pp. 34 f, and N. Rifa`t Ibn Hazm on Jews and Judaism, pp. 220 ff.

6- M. Fu'ad Sarkin, *Majaz Al-Qur'an*, (Cairo, al-Khanji and Dar al-Fikr, 1390 A. H., 1970 A . C.) pp. 1 f.

7- See N. Rifa`t, *Ibn Hazm on Jews and Judaism*, pp. 225 ff.

8- See Muhyi ad-Din Yahya Ibn Sharaf an-Nawawi (621- 676 A. H.), *Al-Manhal Ar-Rawi Min Taqrib An-Nawawi*, ed. by Mustafa al-Khad (Beirut, Dar al-Mallah, n. d.) pp. 29 f. Abu Amer Ibn al-Salah, (642 A. H, 1244 A.C.) *Muqaddima Fi `Ilm Al-Hadith* (Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya 1398 A. H. 1978 A. C.), pp. 1 ff., Abu `Amr `Uthman Ibn `Abd ar-Rahman ash-Shahrazuri (577-643 A. H.), `Ulum al-Hadith, ed. by Nur ad-Din Itr (al-Medina al-Munawara, 1972), and Abu Muhammad `Abd ar-Rahman ar-Razi, (240 - 327), *`Ilal al-Hadith*, (Cairo, al-Muthanna, 1343).

9- The phrase "reminding Qur'an" in our translation stands for the Arabic word "*Dhikr*", "Qur'an" and "*Dhikr*" are synonymous. The Qur'an came to put all humanity into remembrance of the original and pure religion (*Fitra*) upon which Allah has originated mankind.

10- See Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat*, p. 86.

11- Al-Bukhari, *Sahih* (*Kitab Bad' Al-Wahy*).

12- See al-Ghazali, *Ihya'*, vol. 8, p. 89, also my forthcoming book *Muslim Morality*.

13- See Qur'an 2: 85.

14- See Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti, *Al-Itqan*, vol.1, p. 85: also Badr ad-Din Muhammad Ibn `Abdullah az-Zarkashi, *Al-Burhan Fi `Ulum Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, (Cairo, al-Halabi, 1972), vol. 1, p. 238: and Abu `Abdullah az-Zinjant, Tarikh Al-Qur'an, (Beirut, 1388 A. H.: 1969 A. C.), p. 44.

15- Al-Zinjani, *Tarikh Al-Qur'an*, p. 44.

16- Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, vol. 6, p. 110.

17- Al-Bukhari, *Kitab Khalq Af'al Al-`Ibad*, In `Ali Sami al-Nashshar and `Ammar at-Talibi, `Aqa'id as-Salaf, (Cairo, al-Ma'arif, 1971), p. 156.

18- Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, (*Kitab aj-Jihad*)

19- As-Suyuti, *Tarikh Al-Khulata*, ed. by Muhammad Muhyi ad-Din `Abd al-Hamid, (Baghdad, al-Muthanna, 1383 A. H. 1964 A. C.) p.174 .

20- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, pp. 81-84: also Ibn Hàzm, *Ar-Radd `Ala Ibn an-Nighrila*, pp. 77 f.

21- Ibn al-Jazari, *Kitab An-Nashr Fi Al-Qira'at Al-`Ashr*, (Cairo, al-Halabi, n. d.) vol. 2, p. 254 also Ahmad Makki al-Ansari, *Ad-Difa` `An Al-Qur'an*, (Cairo, Dar al-Ma`arif, 1393 A. H. I 973 A. C.) part, I, p. I20.

22- As-Suuyuti, *Al-Itqan*, vol. I, p. 72.

23- M. Bartnel, *What Ten Bible Really Says*, (England, Souvenir Press Ltd., 1982) pp. 11f.

24- See As-Samaw'al al-Maghribi, *Ifham Al-Yahud*, pp. 49 ff. Also Hava Lazarus - Yafah, *Intertwined Worlds, Medieval Islam and the Bible Criticism*, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 43 f, Nurshif Rifa`t, *Ibn Hazm on Jesus and Judaism*, Ph.D. Thesis Exter University, England 1988), chapters 3&4 and Maulana M. Rahmatullah Kairanvi, *Izhar Al-Haqq*, (England, Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd.,1990) part 4 p. 76.

25- See Hava Lazarus.

26- See M. Barthel, *What Bible Really Says*, p. 292, also C. R. Gregory, Canon and Text of the New Testament, (Edinbugh, T. & T . Clark, 1907), pp. 19 ff.

27- J. A. R. "Canon" in T. K. Cheyne and J. S. Black, *Encyclopedia Biblicea*, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1899), vol. 1, col, 676.

28- See A. Mingana, *The Transmission of the Qur'an*, (Woodbrooke Studies, Cambridge, 1928), vol. 2, p. 39.

29- Al-Fakhri, *Fi Al-Adab As-Sultaniyyah Na'l Dawla Al-`Ialamiyyah*, (Akka, n. d.) pp. 244 f .

30- Ibn `Abd al-Malik, *Adh-Dhayl Wal Takmila*, ed. by Muhammad Ibn Sharifa (Beirut, Dar al-Thaqafa, 1963) part, I, vol. I, p. 89.

31- Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, ed. by `Abd al-Wahid Wafi (Cairo, Dar Nahdat Misr, n. d.) vol. 3, pp. 842 ff.

32- Adh-Dhahabi, *Tadhkira Al-Huffaz*, (Hxderabad, Dar al-Ma`arif al-`Uthmaniyyah, 1958) vol. 3, pp. 842 ff.

33- *Ibid.*

34- Al-Bukhari, *Fada' il Al-Qur'an*.

35- See Ahmad ibn al-Hussayn al-Bayhaqi, *Manaqib ash-Shafi`i*, ed. by Ahmad Saqr, (Cairo, Dar at-Turath, 1391 A. H. 1971) vol. I, pp. 280 f also Yaqut, *Irshad Al-Arib*, (Beirut, Dar al-Muatashriq, 1922) vol. 17, p. 284.

36- Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan al-I`tidal*, ed. by al-Bijjawi, (Cairo, Al-Halabi. 1963) p. 385.

37- See his book *At-Taysir Fi Al-Qira'at As-Sab`*, (Istanbul, Matba' at al-Dawla, 1930) pp. dal and ha .

38- Ad-Dhahabi, *Tadhkirah*, vol. 3, p. 1108.

39- Al-Marrakushi, *Dhayl*, vol. 6, p. 398.

40- *Ibid*, vol. 5, p. 488.

41- See e.g. Ibn Abi Hatim ar-Razi, *Taqdimat Al-Ma`rifa Li Kitab Al-Juruti.* As-Suyuti, Is`af Al-Mubatta' Bi Rijal Al-Muwatta' (Beirut, n. d.) pp. 4 f and Ibn Hazm, *An-Nubadh Fi Usul Al-Fiqh Az-Zahiri*, ed. by Muhammad Zahid al-Kawthari, (Cairo, Maktbat al-Anwar, 1940) p. 21.

Chapter 4:

1- R. Arnaldes, *Ibn Hazm,* (E.I.), vol. 3, pp. 795 f.

2- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 1, p. 79.

3- Arguments about the authenticity of Josephus's authorship can be found in Robert Grant, op. cit., pp. 291 f; X.L. Dufour, *The Gospels and the Jesus of History*, trans. and ed. by J. McHugh (London, Collins Sons and Co., 1968), pp. 35 f; see also Georges Berguer, *Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus*, trans. by Eleanor Stimson Brooks and van Wyck Brooks, (London, Williams and Norgate, 1923), pp. 65 f, and W. H. Allen (ed.), *The Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, (London, Cecil Roth B, 1966) pp. 1064 f.

4- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, pp. 20, 37 and 40; see also Ibn Hazm, *Al-Usual Wa Al-Furu`*, vol. 1, p. 212 and al-Biruni, *Al-Athar al-Baqiya*, p. 32.

5- R. Arnaldes, *Ibn Hazm*, (E.I.), vol. 3, p. 796.

6- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 20.

7- B. H. Streeter, op. cit., p. 439. And J. N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, p. 59. Muratorian fragment is "the oldest existing list of the books of the NT. It was discovered by L.A. Maratori (1672-1750) in the Ambrosian Library of Milan and published by him in Milan in 1740. Modern Scholars agree that the original from which this copy was made was composed C. A. D. 180-190 in or near Rome. The document is written in Latin and consists of eighty-five lines. It is a fragment, with the beginning and possibly the end,' broken off. It lists most of the NT books in our common, and makes comment on others. Seven heretics are mentioned by name and their Writings rejected." See S. Barabas "Muratorian fragment" in Merrill C. Tenney, The Zonderuan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, vol. 4, p. 311.

8- Origen quoted by J. N. D. Kelly, op. cit., pp. 61 f.

9- Gregory the Great, moral Praefatio, I, quoted by R. E. Brown, *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, (J. B. C.), vol. 2, p. 203.

10- *Ibid*; see also David A. Pallin, *Revelation*, (N.D.C.T.), p. 505.

11- Sweetman, *op. cit.*, part 2, vol. 1, p. 156; see also Timothy, pp. 47 and 60.

12- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, pp. 34, 44, 47, 50, 60 and 62.

13- Vol. 1, p. 212; see also Adolf Julicher, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. by Janet Penrose Ward (London, Smith Elder and Co., 1904), pp. 317 and 30.

14- A. Richardson, *Preface to the Bible Study* (London, Student Christian Movement Press, 1943), p. 23, and R. E. Brown, *Inspiration and Inerrancy,* (J. B. C.), vol. 2, p. 503.

15- See W. Barclay, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 10.

16- P. 48, quoted by *Ibid.*

17- *The So-called Kerygma and the Historical Jesus*, (E. Oliver and Boyd, 1959), pp. 21 ff.

18- *The Gospels and the Jesus of History*, p. 21. Further reading on this subject can be found in H. R. Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1927), pp. 6 ff.

19- *Al-Milal Wa An-Nihal*, vol. 3, pp. 32 f.

20- *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 33.

21- *Chrysostom*, Part 1, p. 4.

22- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Usul Wa Al-Furu`*, vol. 1, p. 212; see also al-Jahiz, *Thalath Rasa'il*, p. 24.

23- *Al-Milal Wa An-Nihal*, vol. 3, pp. 32 f.

24- Abu al-Hasan `Ali Ibn al-Husayn al-Mas`udi, *Muruj Adhl-Dhahab Wa Ma`adin Al-Jawhr*, ed. by Muhammad Muhyi al-Din `Abd Al-Hamid, (Cairo, Maktabat As-Saada, 1963), vol. 3, pp. 62 ff.

25- M. R. James (trans.), *op. cit.*, pp. 13 f.

26- *Ad-Din Wa Ad-Dawlah*, p. 202.

27- *Kitab Al-Fihrist*, p. 41.

28- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 20.

29- Erwin Preuschen, Analecta, II teil, zur Kanonsgeschichte, (Tubingen, verlag von J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck, 1910), p. 49; see also *At-Turjuman*, op. cit., p. 18, and Ibn al-Nadim, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

30- See Analecta, II tiel, *Ibid.*, pp. 49 and 54; see also James Moffatt, *op. cit.*, pp. 15 ff.

31- D. Paterson Smyth, *Our Bible in the Making*, (London, Sampson Low, Marston and Co., Ltd., 1914), p. 169; see also M.R. James (trans.), *op. cit.*, p. 288.

32- *Growth and Structure of the Gospels*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 99.

33- See p. 361.

34- *Chrysostom*, op. cit., p. 4.

35- L. Pullan, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

36- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 20; see also Cross and Livingstone, *Recared*, (O.D. C.C.), pp. 1162 f.

37- E. Ratcliffe, *The Birth of Christianity in the Light of Today*, (London, Allenson and Co., 1936), p. 101, points out that the general Epistles are sometimes called the "Catholic Epistles". See also H. Jordan, *Catholic Epistles*, (D. A. C.), vol. 1, p. 171.

38- Timothy, p. 48; Ibn Khaldun used the word "*Katalikune*", see *Muqaddimah*, vol. 2, p. 296, and Ahmad Ibn `Ali al-Maqrizi, *Kitab Al-Mawa`iz Wa Al-I`tibar Bi Dhikr Al-Khitat Wa Al-Athar* (Baghdad, al-Muthanna, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 483.

39- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 1, p. 22.

40- Carra De Vaux, (G.C. Anawati) "*Injil*" (E. I.), vol. 3, p. 1205; see also R. Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

41- M. Schreiner's article on *The History of the Bible in Arabic Literature*, quoted by El-Hardallo, op. cit., p. 169.

42- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 20.

43- *Muqaddimah*, part 1, vol. 2, pp. 299 ff, and Ibn Taymiyah, *Aj-Jawab As-Sahih*, vol. 3, pp. 21 ff.

44- (R. I.), p. 74; see also Sweetman, *op. cit.*, part 2, vol. 1, p. 22.

45- W. Barclay, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 149; Bar-Hebraeus, p. 4; see also Meyer, *The Gospel of Matthew*, part 1, vol. 1, p. 6 and Brown, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew,* (J. B. C.), vol. 2, p. 65.

46- A. Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. VIII.

47- Leon-Dufour, *op. cit.*, pp. 109 f and Robert Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

48- W. H. Bennett and W. F. Adeney, *op. cit.*, pp. 286 ff. and Willoughby C. Allen, "Matthew (Gospel)" (D.C.G.), vol. 2, p. 141.

49- Leon-Dufour, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

50- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 20.

51- De Vir 111, 3-; quoted by W. H. Bennett and W. F. Adeney, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

52- Ibn Taymiyah, *Aj-Jawab As-Sahih*, vol. 3, pp. 5 f; see also Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 483.

53- A. Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. VIII.

54- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, pp. 20 f.

55- A view supported by Ibn al-Batriq the Christian historian, see Ibn Taymiyah, *Aj-Jawab As-Sahih*, vol. 3, pp. 5 f; al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 483, and Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, (London, Robert Scott, 1911), p. 8, who suggests John as one of several possible translators.

56- R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*, (J. B. C.), vol. 2, p. 65.

57- T. K. Cheyne & J. Sutherland, *Encyclopedia Biblica*, (London, Adam and Charles Blackmomi) vol. 2, p. 1890; J. E. L. Oulton, (trans.), Eusebius Ecclesiastical History, (London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1980), vol. 1, pp. 251, 295; and vol. 2, p. 75. See also H. S. Shelton, *The Gospels and the New Papyri*, in Hibbert Journal (Jan. 1945), pp. 161 f.

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59- For further details see J. C. Fenton, *Saint Matthew*, (London, Cox and Wyman, 1976), p. 12.

60- Kirsapp Lake (trans.), *Eusebius Ecclesiastical History*, (London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1980), vol. 1, p. 297.

61- Ibn Taymiyah, *Aj-Jawab as-Sahih*, vol. 3, p. 51.

62- Abu Zahra.

63- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 20.

64- Abu al-Hasan `Ali b. al-Hussayn al-Mas`udi, *At-Tanbih Wa Al-Ishraf*, (Beirut, Maktabat Khayyat, 1965), p. 137; Ibn Khaldun, *Al-`Ibar*, part 1, vol. 2, pp. 295 ff; D. Attwater, *op. cit.*, p. 232; see also Bar-Hebraeus, p. 75.

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68- At-Turjuman, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

69- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 20; Ibn Hazm, *Al-Usul Wa Al-Furu`*, vol.1, p. 212; see also Ibn Khaldun, *Al-`Ibar*, part 1, voL 2, pp. 294 ff, and al-Jahiz, *Thalath Rasail*, p. 24.

70- A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1942), pp. XI fff; see also A. Souter, *Luke* (D.C.G.), vol. 2, p. 83.

71- A. R. C. Leaney, *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, (London, Adam and Charles Black, 1966), p. 4; G. B. Caird, Saint Luke, Penguin Books, (London, Cox and Wyman, 1977), p. 17; and Gore et. al., (N.C.H.S.), Part 3, p. 208.

72- W. Barclay, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 187 f.

73- A. R. C. Leaney, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

74- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 20.

75- W. Barclay, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 194; for other views see Al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 483; Bar-Hebraeus, p. 92 and Brown, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, (J. B. C.), vol. 2, pp. 118 f.

76- Sweetman, *op. cit.*, part 2, vol. 1, p. 124.

77- W. Barclay, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 194; see also W. Manson, *The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, The Gospel of Luke,* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), p. XXIX.

78- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 20.

79- *Tuhfat Al-'Arib*, p. 16.

80- Muhammad Ibn Yusuf al-Amiri, *Al-I`lam Bimanaqib Al-Islam*, ed. by Ahmad A. Ghurab, (Cairo, Dar al-Katib al-`Arabi, 1967), pp. 205 f .

81- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 62.

82- *Ibid.* See also Ibn Hazm, *Al-Usul Wa Al-Furu`*, vol. 1, p. 212 and Kirsopp Lake (trans.) *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 455.

83- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 20; Ibn Hazm, *Al-Usul Wa Al-Furu`*, vol. 1, p. 212. See also Ahmad Ibn `Ali al-Ya`qubi, *Tarikh al-Ya`qubi*, (Beirut, Dar Sadir, 1960), vol. 1, pp. 69 ff and Al-Mas`udi , *At-Tanbih Wa al-Ishraf*, p. 137.

84- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 2, p. 20; Kirsopp Lake (trans.), *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 455; see also C. K. Barrett, *op. cit.*, pp. 33 f, 37 and 39, and Bennett and S. F. Adeney, *op. cit.*, pp. 337 f.

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91- Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, (England, Penguin Books 1990) p. 15.

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Chapter 5:

1- Qur'an 2:87.

2- Qur'an 3:84.

3- See e.g. `Abd al-Malik b. Hisham/Muhammad b. Ishaq, *The L ife of Muhmmad*, a translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah, by A. Guillaume (O.U.P. Pakistan Branch, 1955, reprinted in Pakistan 1967, Fifth impression, 1978) pp. 163f, and 274ff.

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5- L. E. P. Erith, *Introduction to the Criticism of the Pentateuch*, in (N.C.H.S.), part 1, p. 22.

6- Ibn Taymiyya, *Aj-Jawab As-Sahih*, vol. 3, pp. 320-22 and Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an,* (London, Sheldon press, 1965), p. 142.

7- See e.g. Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol.1, pp. 87-154 and vol. 2, pp. 1019, and Ibn Taymiyah, *Aj-Jawab As-Sahih*, vol. 2, pp. 18 ff.

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9- Abu al-Faraj `Abd ar-Rahman ibn al-Jawzi, *Zad Al-Masir Fi `Ilm At-Tafsir*, (Beirut, al-Maktab al-Islami, 1964), vol. 1, p. 349; see also az-Zarkashi, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 289, and Abu al-Fadl Jamal ad-Din ibn Mansur, *Lisan Al-`Arab*, (Beirut, Dar Sadir, 1968), vol. 11, p. 648.

10- Geoffrey Parrinder, *op. cit.*, p.142.

11- *Ibid.*, p. 143 and (Carra De Vaux - [G. C. Anawati]) "*Injil*" (E.I.), vol. 3, p. 120.

12- A. Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an*, pp. 71, 95, quoted by G. Parrinder, op. cit., p. 143.

13- A. Guillaume (trans.), *The Life of Muhammad*. p. 258; see also Geoffrey Parrinder, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

14- Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya Wa An-Nihayah*, vol. 1, p. 78.

15- H. J. Bardsley, *Reconstructions of Early Christian Document*, I, (London, 1935), pp. 32, 334. see also M. R. James (trans.), *The Apocryphal New Testament*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924), p. 485.

16- M. R. James, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

17- Lonsdale and Laura Ragg, ed. and trans., *The Gospel of Barnabas*, (Pakistan, Karachi, Fazleesons, n.d.), p. 9.

18- Az-Zamakhshari, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 575; see also G. Parrinder, *op. cit.*, p.144.

19- Qur'an 10:94.

20- Sweetman, *op. cit.*, part 2, vol. 1, p. 123.

21- G. Parrinder, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

22- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 4, p. 50.

23- *Ibid.*, and (R. 2). p. 60.

24- Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 4, p. 50.

25- At-Tabari, *Jami`*, vol. II, p. 115.

26- *Ibid.*, see also (R. 2), p. 60.

27- *Ibid.*

28- Qur'an 5:116.

29- *Jami`*, vol. 11, p. 115.

30- *Ghara'yib Al-Qur'an, Wa Ragha'ib Al-Furqan*, in the margin of al-Tabari, *Jami`*, vol. 11, pp. 116 f.

31- *Ibid.* The above statement (concerning the word IN) goes back to al-Hasan and al-Hussayn Ibn al-Fadl, as Abu Hayyan states in *Al-Bahr Al-Muhit*, (Cairo, Matba'at al-Sa`ada, 1328 A. H.), vol. 5, p. 191; see also (R. 2), p. 60. The footnote.

32- Abu `Abdullah al-Qurtubi, *op. cit.*, vol. 8, pp. 382 f.

33- Ibn Taymiyah, Aj-Jawab As-Sahih, vol. 1, pp. 334-341 and ff.

34- G. Parrinder, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

35- David Friedrich Strauss, *A New Life of Jesus*, (London, Williams and Norgate, 1879), vol. 1, p. 56, concerning the question of why there are four Gospels only, see *Ibid.*, and the argument of Irenaeus, in J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius* (London, S.P.C.K., 1980), pp. 122 f; also C. R. Gregory, *op. cit.*, pp. 55. ff. W. Montgomery watt in his book Companion to the Qur'an (p. 46), points out that: "The Torah (Hebrew for 'law' or 'instruction') is properly the Books of Moses or Pentateuch, but, as the revealed scripture of the Jews, may be said to correspond to the (Christian) Old Testament. Similarly, the Gospel (Ar. *Injil*) is assumed to be a single book, and, as the scripture of the Christian, may stand for the whole New Testament".

36- M. R. James (trans.), *op. cit*, pp. 75 and 82.

37- John 1:29 and Revelations 5:12-13, and 6:16.

38- Matthew 3:17, Mark 3:12 and John 1:34.

39- John 1:14. For further details see Marcello Craveri, *The Life of Jesus*, trans. by Charles Lam Markman (London, Panther Books, 1969), p. 322.

40- Qur'an 2:285, 4:136, Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol. 1, pp. 8-11, see also Ibn Taymiyah, *Aj-Jawab As-Sahih*, vo. 1, pp. 5 ff and al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol. 4, p.429.

41- See e.g. Ibn Hazm, *Al-Faisal*, vol.1, pp. 88 and vol. 2, p.12, see also `Ali Ibn Rabban at-Tabari, *Ad-Din Wa Ad-Dawla, Fi Ithbat Nubuwat An-Nabi Muhammad Salla Allah Alayhi Wa Sallam*, ed. by Adil Nuweihed, (Beirut, Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, 1979), pp. 138 ff and 184 ff.

42- Al-I`lam, ed. by A. al-Saqqa (Cairo, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya) p. 203 f. also (English translation part 3, pp. 36 f, Rahmat Allah Ibn Khalil, Izhar al-Haqq, ed. by Muhammad Kamal Farraj (Cairo, al-Ahram, 1978), vol. 1, p. 186; Abu Ja`far Ahmad Ibn Abd al-Samad al-Qurtubi, *Maqami Hamat As-Sulban Wa Marati Rawdat Al-Iman*, ed. by Muhammad Abd al-Ghani Shama, (Cairo, al-Madani, n.d.), pp. 183 f and Zaid B. A. Islam and Christianity, (England and York, sessions Ltd, 1977), pp. 2 ff.

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45- Ibn Khalil al-Hindi, *op. cit.*, see the footnote by Muhammad at-Tayyibi, p. 886.

46- Al-I`lam, pp.211.

47- *Izhar Al-Haqq*, vol. 3. pp. 38 f.

48- Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi, see *Kitab an-Nubuwwat*, ed. by Ahmad as-Saqqa, (Cairo, Maktabat al-Kuliyyat al-Azhariyya) pp. 133 - 139.

49- New Jersey, Priceton University Press, 1992).

50- *Ibid.*

51- Fakhar ad-Din ar-Razi, *Muhassal Afkar Al-Mutaqadimin Wal Mut'akhrin* (Cairo, Maktabat al-Kuliyyat al-Azhariyya) p. 211 and Fakhr ar-Razi, *Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, Cairo, Dar al-Ghad al-`Arabi, 1412 A. H. 1991 A. D. vol. 3, pp. 186 f, vol. 9, 233.

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Printed in Egypt by ISLAMIC PRINTING & PUBLISHING Co. Tel:. 015 / 363314 - 362313 .

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